



FY20 Semi-Annual Report

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USAID'S ACT TO END NTDS | WEST PROGRAM

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USAID's Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) | West Program

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AcceleraTE	Accelerate Trachoma Elimination
Act West	Act to End Neglected Tropical Disease West program
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
ALB	Albendazole
ASCEND	Accelerating the Sustainable Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases
ASTMH	American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
B&M	Branding and marking
BELF	Blueprint for the elimination of lymphatic filariasis
BETR	Blueprint for the elimination of trachoma
CDC	U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC/DPDM	CDC Division of Parasitic Diseases and Malaria
CDD	Community drug distributor
CDTI	Community-directed treatment with ivermectin
CES	Coverage evaluation survey
CIND	Country integrated neglected tropical disease database
COR-NTD	Coalition for Operational Research on Neglected Tropical Diseases
CWG	Communication working group
CY	Calendar year
DGSP	Director General of Public Health
DHIS2	District Health Information System
DHMT	District health management team
DBS	Dried blood spots
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DLM	Direction de Lutte contre la Maladie (Disease Control Directorate)
DNBP	<i>Direction Nationale de la Santé Publique</i> (National Public Health Directorate) (MOH) (Benin)
DQA	Data quality assessment
DSA	Disease-specific assessment
EDC	Electronic data capture
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
EMMR	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Report
ESPEN	Expanded Special Project for the Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases
EU	Evaluation unit
FAA	Fixed amount award
FTS	Filariasis test strip
FY	Fiscal year
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GIS	Geographic information system
HD	Health district

HDI	Health & Development International
HMIS	Health management information system
HSS	Health systems strengthening
ICCC	Intra Country Coordination Committee (Ghana)
ICTC	International Coalition for Trachoma Control
IEC	Information, education and communication
IML	Implementation Management Lead
IP	Implementing partner
IR	Intermediate result
IRS	Intermediate Result for NTDs sustainability
IVM	Ivermectin
ITI	International Trachoma Initiative
JAP	Joint application package
JRSM	Joint request for special medicines
KM	Knowledge management
LF	Lymphatic filariasis
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MANDE	Monitoring and evaluation data error checker
MDA	Mass drug administration
MDP	Mectizan Donation Program
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MMDP	Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSAS	Senegal Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
MSI	Methodology for sustaining impact of NTD programs
MVP	Minimally viable product
NNN	Neglected Tropical Disease Non-Governmental Organization Network
NTD	Neglected tropical disease
NTD-SC	Neglected Tropical Disease Support Center
NTDP	National NTD Program
OEC	Onchocerciasis expert committee
OEM	Onchocerciasis elimination mapping
OHS	Office of Health Systems
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive chemotherapy
PCT	Preventive chemotherapy
PFM	Public Financial Management

PPE	Personal protective equipment
PHII	Public Health Informatics Institute
PHU	Peripheral health unit
PIRS	Performance indicator reference sheets
PNDO/EFL	<i>Programme National de Dévolution de l'Onchocercose et d'Elimination de la Filariose Lymphatique</i> (National Program for the Elimination of Onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis)
PNDS	<i>Plan National de Développement Sanitaire</i> (National Health Development Plan) (Senegal)
PNF	Partners Network Forum (Sierra Leone)
PNLO	<i>Programme National de Lutte contre l'Onchocercose</i> (National Program for Onchocerciasis Control) (Cameroon)
PNLMT	<i>(Programme National de Lutte contre les MTN in French)</i> National Program for Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases
PNMTN	<i>Programme National pour les Maladies Tropicales Négligées</i> (National NTD Program)
PNSO	<i>Programme National de Santé Oculaire</i> (National Eye Health Program)
PPP	Public-private partnership
PTS	Post treatment surveillance
PZQ	Praziquantel
QA/QI	Quality assurance/quality improvement
QC	Quality control
RDT	Rapid diagnostic test
ROI	Return on investment
RPRG	Regional program review group
RSTMH	Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
SAC	School-age children
SAE	Severe adverse event
SAR	Semi-annual report
SC	Supply chain
SCF	Supply chain forum
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SHEP	School Health Education Program (Ghana Education Service)
SCI	Schistosomiasis Control Initiative
SCM	Supply chain management
SCT	Supervisor's coverage tool
SMM	Sustainability maturity model
SMT	Senior management team
STAG	Strategic and technical advisory group
STH	Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
STTA	Short-term technical assistance

TA	Technical assistance
TAC	Technical advisory committee
TAS	Transmission assessment survey
TEC	Trachoma Expert Committee
TEMP	Trachoma Elimination Monitoring Form
TEO	Tetracycline eye ointment
TF	Trachomatous follicular
TFGH	Task Force for Global Health
TIPAC	Tool for integrated planning and costing
TIS	Trachoma impact survey
TSS	Trachoma surveillance survey
TT	Trachoma trichiasis
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAR	Western Area Rural
WHA	World Health Assembly
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
ZTH	Zithromax

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) granted funding to FHI 360 to implement the *Act to End Neglected Tropical Disease | West (Act | West) Program* from July 19, 2018, to July 18, 2023. The program is part of the global effort to eliminate neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). It particularly aims to eliminate lymphatic filariasis (LF), trachoma, and onchocerciasis (OV) (in certain countries) and control schistosomiasis (SCH) and soil-transmitted helminthiasis (STH) in 11 endemic West African countries—including Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Ghana, Côte D'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. It also supports achievement of sustainable service delivery, with growing ownership of national governments in the elimination and/or control of NTDs. The program recognizes the pivotal role of mainstreaming NTD programs into national health systems through budget allocation, inclusion of NTD data in the national health data management system, and development of policies and guidelines to empower health care workers to implement sustainable NTD interventions. The program has allocated resources to achieve these aims. This report covers the period April 1–September 30, 2020 and outlines the key achievements and challenges in the second six months of the second year of program implementation.

Act | West program implementation in all 11 countries was suspended to varying extent during the reporting period due to the health threats COVID-19 posed in the world. Based on guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO), USAID recommended the NTD programs (NTDPs) in these countries stop implementation as of March 2020 to curb the spread of the disease. Consequently, activities that required person-to-person contact and social gathering—such as training of health care workers and community drug distributors (CDDs), mass drug administrations (MDAs), and disease-specific assessments (DSAs)—were halted and postponed. FHI 360 started monitoring the status of activities in all countries through a weekly tracking matrix that was shared with USAID and worked with the NTDPs to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for barrier measures to reduce the spread of corona virus if/when activities resumed. FHI 360 also collaborated with NTDPs in all countries to present case studies to USAID outlining the safe resumption of activities. Taking these case studies into consideration, along with guidelines from WHO on safe implementation of MDAs and population-based surveys, USAID approved the resumption of activities in all countries starting from July. All countries therefore rescheduled their timelines for activities in the first six months of fiscal year 2021 (FY21), incorporating appropriate barrier measures.



Act | West program Côte d'Ivoire Pre-TAS

This report includes sections on MDA coverage among at-risk populations in endemic countries (IR1); promoting sustainable NTD elimination and control (IR/S); monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL); management of the cooperative agreement; communications and knowledge management; and gender mainstreaming.

IR1. Increased MDA Coverage Among At-risk Populations in Endemic Countries

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent suspension of activities planned for the second semester of FY20 resulted in postponement of many activities to the first six months of FY21. Nevertheless, four countries—Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, and Togo—conducted MDAs. In **Benin**, LF/OV MDA was conducted in four districts, with epidemiological coverage ranging from 84.1% to 87.4 %. In **Côte d’Ivoire**, OV-only MDA was carried out in 20 districts. **Guinea** conducted LF/OV/SCH/STH MDA in 19 health districts (HDs) and trachoma MDA in one HD. **Togo** also executed integrated OV/SCH/STH MDA in 36 OV-endemic districts, 34 SCH districts, and 39 STH districts. The countries are currently collating the MDA results.

Disease-specific assessments (DSAs) were also conducted in five countries following approval of resumption of activities. **Benin** conducted pre-re transmission assessment survey (TAS) in four districts that had failed TAS in FY 18; **Côte d’Ivoire** carried out the first pre-TAS in 46 HDs; **Ghana** implemented pre-re-TAS in five HDs; and **Senegal** executed pre-TAS in 14 HDs. In **Togo**, OV epidemiological surveys collected dried blood samples from 12 districts. The results of the DSAs will be available in subsequent months.

National Onchocerciasis Expert Committees (NOEC) meetings in many countries were postponed to the first quarter of FY21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges posed by the outbreak, Act | West supported Benin and Senegal to develop terms of reference (TORs) for data collection, analysis, and reporting—laying the ground for collating and analyzing the wealth of data in these countries. Act | West also worked with USAID to review the recommendations made by the Ghana OEC meeting. It was agreed to support the country to carry out stop OV MDA in 60 HDs.

Considering the prevention measures required to curb the spread of COVID-19, countries utilized teleconference and remote support to prepare dossiers on LF and trachoma. **Burkina Faso** continued to write the first draft of the trachoma elimination dossier. In **Cameroon**, *Programme National de Lutte contre l’Onchocercose* (National Program for Onchocerciasis Control, or PNLO) conducted one remote and another in-person meeting to evaluate progress in implementing recommendations and tasks from the LF elimination dossier workshop in February 2020. The PNLO collected close to 70% of the data and reports required for the write up of the dossier. Act | West conducted a preparatory meeting in **Guinea** to introduce the processes for the trachoma elimination dossier. In **Togo**, *Programme National pour les Maladies Tropicales Négligées* (PNMTN) completed the review and resubmission of the trachoma dossier to WHO. WHO responded with a few additional questions.

IR/S. Promote Sustainable NTD Control

Act | West continued to pursue sustainability of investments for NTDs from donors, partners, and governments and mainstreaming of NTD programs in the health systems of countries. As COVID-19 posed challenges to site visits and physical technical assistance (TA), Act | West consortium members reverted to virtual conferences, trainings, and TA using online platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal progressed to the third phase of the sustainability plan framework—i.e., implementing the sustainability plan (see Figure 1 on page 25). Both countries have completed their plans and are in the process of conducting political validation meetings (in October 2020 for Côte d’Ivoire and in December 2020 for Senegal). These countries will soon progress to phase 4, which is implementation of the plans. Ghana, Togo, and Sierra Leone have moved to phase 3 and finalized the

first drafts of their plans. Act | West is providing support to finalize the plans in both countries. Mali, Niger, and Benin are still in phase 2 (conducting landscape and situational analyses).

Multisector coordination is pivotal to sustainability of the NTD programs. Ghana successfully revamped its Intra-Country Coordination Committee (ICCC) for NTDs. Mali is finalizing preparation for a Roadmap Development Workshop, which was suspended due to security issues. Niger conducted a workshop to develop a roadmap for multisector coordination. Senegal and Sierra Leone are developing TORs for multisector coordination. The NTDPs in these countries are finalizing the administrative processes for ministerial endorsement and approval.



Sustainability Plan development , Dakar, Senegal

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

During the reporting period, Act | West utilized an electronic data collection (EDC) platform—ESPEN Collect—in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Benin. Côte d'Ivoire used ESPEN Collect in the pre-TAS in 46 HDs in August/September. Senegal engaged ESPEN collect for pre-TAS in September, and Benin used the platform in the pre-re-TAS in September in four HDs. In collaboration with Act | East, Act | West developed a supervisor's checklist for COVID-19 protocol. The checklist was added to ESPEN Collect, and data were collected in Senegal and Benin. Other EDC platforms (besides ESPEN Collect) used by Act | West countries include ONA (in countries managed by Helen Keller) and Lymph App (a tool used in Ghana).

The MEL team provided technical support to countries for their own country-owned and -managed integrated NTD databases (CINDs) that can be securely maintained and utilized for decision making and submission of drug applications. In the reporting period, the Act | West MEL team conducted information gathering to understand CIND usage, the status of historical data entry, and practices regarding storage and safeguarding data. The information will be used as the basis for TA in key strategies, including: 1) ensuring the existence and utilization of a stable platform for NTD data storage and management (CIND or an equivalent); 2) ensuring the database is up to date and includes all current and historical data for all relevant NTD diseases, and c) ensuring that the data is secure, access is password-protected, and data are regularly backed-up.

Challenges

The global COVID-19 pandemic prevented all 11 countries from implementing activities as planned for the reporting period. Following USAID approval to restart activities in July 2020, some countries implemented planned activities in FY20, and others rescheduled implementation for the first six months of FY21.

MANAGEMENT OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The key principles that govern Act | West operations are in accord with the expected program results as defined in the Program Framework. The FY20 Work Plan was built on the accumulated experience and lessons learned in NTD programs in West Africa—directly by FHI 360 or in collaboration with our partners. These principles include maximizing the use of existing government networks and strengthening collaborations for efficient and cost-effective implementation of NTD activities; partnering with Ministries of Health (MOHs) and other NTD stakeholders to strengthen the MOHs and enhance sustainable local capacity in the countries; and promoting country ownership in every step of the process.

The FHI 360-led Act | West consortium includes the following partners: Helen Keller International (HKI), Health & Development International (HDI), Deloitte Consulting, World Vision, Inc., Americares, Inc. (October 2018–September 2020), and American Leprosy Missions (specifically AIM Initiative program).

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Key Act | West Program activities during the reporting period are described below.

- Successfully drafted, finalized, and submitted work plan packages for 11 countries and the headquarters for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) to USAID by end of August 2020. Coordinated and convened virtual work planning sessions to discuss proposed FY21 work plan activities for each portfolio country to inform the full-fledged work plan package development in two phases: 1) program team with respective MOH/NTDP teams to draft and get consensus on a list of proposed FY21 activities; 2) discussion of activities by Act | West program team with USAID to get preliminary feedback and test the soundness of proposed activities against USAID expectations. The virtual format proved successful in conducting meetings remotely while enabling social distancing and adhering to imposed restrictions to curb the transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Following the March 2020 USAID approval of the Gender Analysis And Strategy Report, FHI 360 Gender Team drafted a separate Gender Strategy Recommendations document that details areas where program implementation could be modified to rectify gender gaps and barriers in Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire (where field work took place).
- Developed COVID-19 contingency plans for all program activities by country, to ensure minimum disruption to program implementation and stay the course to submit and deliver quality work on schedule (as and when feasible) against the FY20 work plan and overall award. The contingency plans/activity trackers were updated regularly and shared with USAID to assess the effect of COVID-19 on timely program implementation while taking into consideration guidance from both WHO and the respective governments.
- Obtained USAID approval to restart FY20 program field activities for all 11 portfolio countries once they demonstrated comprehensive awareness and readiness to resume work in the COVID-19 context. Act | West continues to monitor and track restarted program activities carefully to ensure implementation adheres to appropriate mitigation measures. These include compliance with the two-meter physical distancing requirement, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks/coverings, handwashing, and adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs). Act

| West continued to check in with USAID to provide a status update on implementation progress within the required COVID-19 precautions. This included presentation of photos and discussion of key observations during restarting of activities.

- Continued promoting USAID’s sustainability strategy and framework at both national and global levels. This involved coordinating sustainability work with other NTDs investors:
 - Participated in various virtual conferences and webinars, such as the WHO webinar on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and the Neglected Tropical Disease Non-Governmental Organization Network (NNN) conference to highlight country progress towards sustainability planning—including Act | West technical support to NTDPs and contribution to the USAID NTD sustainability agenda.
 - Provided technical support towards the political validation process of the Côte d’Ivoire Sustainability Plan. The plan is a strategic document highlighting the country’s commitment to a sustainable approach to NTD programming and meant to facilitate integration of key NTD functions in policies, strategic planning, health financing, and health sector performance monitoring. It creates momentum for government endorsement and builds upon achievements conducting MDA campaigns.
- Participated in a meeting of the strategic task team of the International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC) on September 23, 2020, to discuss development of the ICTC’s next strategic plan (2021–2025).
- Given the virtual format of the 2020 meeting of the Coalition for Operational Research on Neglected Tropical Diseases (COR-NTDs), the Neglected Tropical Disease Support Center (NTD-SC) is presenting a new option to prepare for COR-NTDs to ensure concrete operational research questions are discussed. The Act | West trachoma focal point has been working with the USAID and Act | East trachoma focal points to organize the pre-meeting.
- Submitted and received approvals for all abstracts and symposia proposals put forward for the 2020 American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) conference, to take place virtually on November 15–19, 2020.

General Operations

- Continued routine monitoring and management of consortium partner subawards to ensure compliance with USAID reporting, spending, and regulations through in-person meetings and/or via phone calls and emails.
- Held regular conference calls and/or meetings between the USAID NTD team and the Act | West Program team to exchange information, consult on various issues, and keep all stakeholders up-to-date on program implementation, especially given the current COVID-19 pandemic environment.
- Finalized the recruitment process for a number of both program and administrative staff at HQ and in the field.
- Reviewed and approved trailing FY20 second tier fixed amount awards (FAAs) as well as FAA modifications that extended the period of performance for FY20 activities beyond September 30, 2020. Most of the extensions are through December 2020.

- Requested and obtained USAID approval for various Act | West requests, including issuance of first tier FY20 FAA modifications for Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal and procurement of restricted commodities such as drugs (tetracycline eye ointment) and equipment (vehicles).
- Obtained FHI 360 registration in Benin on April 17, 2020. This welcome development facilitates finalizing the office operations setup (which is contingent on having registration in place).
- Received USAID feedback on all FY21 work plans; responses and revised work plan documents were resubmitted to USAID for final review and approval. Received USAID approval for four FY21 country work plans; the rest of the approvals followed in October 2020, with the exception of Sierra Leone.
- Reviewed and shared USAID's guidance for procuring PPE with the Act | West consortium partners. The Act | West team explained what the guidance covers and does not cover, material sourcing, and required approvals.
- Reviewed and shared with Act | West countries the WHO interim guidance on resumption of mass treatment, active case-finding, and population-based surveys for NTDs in the context of COVID-19. Act | West, in consultation with USAID, has worked closely with each portfolio country to ensure proper follow through of precautionary measures and risk–benefit assessments before restarting programs—especially community-based activities such as MDAs and DSAs.
- Submitted various contractual program deliverables due in the second half of FY20: monthly reports (March–August 2020), FY20 SAR 1, financial reports (SF-425, accruals and pipeline analysis), serious adverse event quarterly reports, and quarterly disease trackers.

Collaboration and Coordination with USAID

- Coordination with USAID: The Act | West technical team has had regular contact with USAID technical specialists for each NTD (LF, trachoma, OV, SCH, and STH).
- Regular communication with key personnel: This included both scheduled and ad hoc bi-weekly meetings between the Program Director, Technical Director, MEL Director, and Health System Strengthening (HSS) Lead and the USAID/AOR to discuss progress and challenges and seek solutions to problems. Ad hoc communication channels (email and phone) are always open and available with the Program Director and other members of the team.
- Bi-monthly review meetings: An expanded stakeholders meeting is held bi-monthly to discuss progress towards objectives, facilitate collaboration, and troubleshoot issues.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other NTD Stakeholders

- Coordination with The END Fund: Act | West began the groundwork to seek END Fund support for calendar year 2020 (CY20) MDA in the same four regions in Senegal (Louga, Kedougou, Tambacounda, and Saint Louis) that were supported in FY20. The support will cover integrated MDA in 15 HDs. FHI 360 is still in negotiations with END Fund; status of requested funding for FY21 cannot be confirmed at this point.
- Coordination with Sightsavers: Participated in a number of coordination calls with Sightsavers at HQ level regarding its two programs—Accelerating the Sustainable Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (ASCEND) and Accelerate Trachoma Elimination (AcceleraTE)—to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure smooth implementation of programs at the country level:

- Sightsavers presented their COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigation action (RAMA) tool as an option for countries to use, particularly where Act | West and Accelerate/ASCEND overlap. On August 11, 2020, Sightsavers presented their COVID-19 RAMA tool to the Côte d'Ivoire NTDP.
 - Held discussion on operations research on PPE usage during trachoma surveys. The research will be primarily supported by Sightsavers, but collaboration has been opened up to the Act | West and East programs, USAID, Tropical Data, and WHO.
 - Held coordination call to share calendar activities in countries with relevant events, including tools developed by Sightsavers to assess safe restart activities in the context of COVID-19.
- Coordination with the Expanded Special Project for Elimination of NTDs (ESPEN): Act | West coordinated with ESPEN on a number of issues:
 - Shipment of surplus PZQ pills by ESPEN from Senegal to Mali to help fill the 4 million PZQ pills gap and allow Mali to implement the 2020 SCH MDA.
 - Continued to support ESPEN supply chain management (SCM) efforts to promote and support NTDPs to review SCM SOPs developed by the Supply Chain Forum members, including USAID.
 - Act | West organized a webinar facilitated by ESPEN colleagues to discuss the new strategy for the SCH subdistrict treatment data management and how to forecast medicine needs. The webinar was intended for the consortium implementing partners (IP) to support technical countries. Updates on ESPEN's new functionalities were also shared with IPs.
 - Attended the ESPEN presentation on supply chain's logistics management information system using Excel-based format (developed by WHO and adapted to NTD).
 - Worked with ESPEN to review and assist countries to improve their supply chain SOPs.
 - Met with ESPEN to discuss the possibility of collecting data for the DSA version of the COVID-19 checklist using ESPEN Collect. ESPEN accommodated this request, and both Benin and Senegal collected this information through ESPEN Collect alongside their pre-TAS.
 - Worked with ESPEN Collect to see if an ODK (EDC) version of the checklist (developed by Helen Keller) could be added onto the usual ESPEN Collect platform to facilitate the collection of COVID-19 checklist-related data through EDC. ESPEN agreed to integrate the ODK version of the Supervisor's Checklist, and the related data was collected in electronic form in both Senegal and Benin for the FY20 pre-TAS, pre-re-TAS, and TAS2.

Participation in Other Global Meetings and Conferences

- Participated in two Supply Chain Forum meetings: A meeting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was held on April 23, 2020; WHO NTD Geneva gave an update on survey findings on countries' physical inventory of donated drugs (including that a substantial quantity of drugs, especially PZQ tablets, were at risk to expire mid-2020). WHO also confirmed that drug applications can be submitted yearlong through WHO if the request is submitted 8–10 months before an MDA is scheduled. The second meeting reiterated the commitment of Pharma and donation programs to continue supporting shipments of medicines by sea until COVID-19 restrictions lift to allow use of airfreight. Merck Germany voiced its concerns about the high number of PZQ expiring due to delay implementing MDAs.

- Participated in a discussion with the Trachoma Expert Committee (TEC) on May 4, 2020, on the impact of uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The call confirmed that Pfizer is committed to providing all the Zithromax (ZTH) needed for 2020 and 2021, and as countries are ready to resume MDA, International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) will resume shipping ZTH; should countries need to administer two rounds of MDA in CY2021 to “catch-up” for missing the CY2020 treatment, ITI will be ready to supply the needed ZTH. In addition, the 2021 ZTH application review took place during the summer TEC meeting on August 11–12, 2020.
- Participated in a series of phone calls with ITI between May 6–11, 2020, to discuss the applications for ZTH from Niger, Guinea, Cameroon, and Côte d’Ivoire. The purpose was to ensure that the country requests matched Act | West’s understanding of the CY2021 needs.
- Attended and participated in the NNN virtual conference, September 8–10, 2020. Act | West was well represented and the top two key leadership roles of the NNN (2020–2021) are held by Act | West.
 - Dr Kisito Ogoussan, Implementation Management Lead for FHI 360’s Act | West team, is the current NNN Vice Chair (2019–2020); he will become the NNN Chair (2020–2021) on Sept 10, 2020.
 - Ms. Arielle Dolegui, Technical Advisor for Cross-Sectoral Collaboration for World Vision’s Act | West team, has been nominated for NNN Vice Chair (2020–2021).
 - Dr. Yaobi Zhang, Senior Scientific Advisor on NTDs for Helen Keller International's Act | West team, was NNN Chair (2019–2020). In this role, Dr. Zhang oversaw the organization of the 2020 NNN annual conference.
- Act | West Implementation Lead and the NTD Program Managers for Ghana and Sierra Leone facilitated a quality improvement (QI) workshop to share best practices using the QI model to enhance program performance in Ghana and Sierra Leone. Next steps include development of technical briefs on country experiences to share best practices with the NTD community and beyond.
- Act | West technical assistance partners Deloitte, World Vision, and AIM Initiative presented on preventive chemotherapy NTDs post-elimination cost model, sustainable service delivery, and innovate to accelerate progress against NTDs, respectively.
- Participated in the virtual RAFET meeting (*Reseau Africain Francophone des Experts du Trachome*) on August 26, 2020. The primary topics discussed included WHO guidance on COVID-19, the status of COVID-19 in francophone Africa, and an update from ITI on shipping drugs during the pandemic.
- During the Supply Chain Forum meeting organized over Zoom, on May 28, 2020, discussed and provided updates on the impact of COVID-19 on medicines supply chain. During the last meeting, Pharma and donation programs reiterated their support to continue shipping medicines by sea until the COVID-19 restrictions allow use of airfreight. Also, Merck German was concerned about the high number of PZQ expiring due to delay of MDAs.

Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Report

FHI 360 continued to monitor its sub-grantees’ ability to perform the mandatory environmental compliance requirements envisioned for Act | West program activities, including ensuring portfolio countries properly disposed of any PPE procured by the program.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1. INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES—PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES

Overview

The Act to End NTDs | West program supported NTD programs to review key activities and prioritize DSAs and MDAs disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A challenge in restarting activities was to determine the best period—considering rainy seasons, elections, and school closures that were not ideal for implementation. Act | West developed a tracker to provide updates on countries' restrictions due to the pandemic, follow up on delays and postponements of activities, and determine the right time to resume activities. Most preparatory meetings, planning, and workshops were able to continue under strict conformity with COVID-19 prevention measures. During the reporting period, the country teams, IPs, and TA providers used virtual platforms for meetings, remote training, workshops, and monitoring to keep the programs alive and to progress. In most countries, the NTDPs took stepwise approaches to restart activities—enforcing implementation of SOPs indispensable to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection. Due to the growing need and use of remote trainings, online platforms, and remote work, Act | West assessed connectivity and bandwidth in each of the 11 countries and provided financial support to the NTDPs and country offices to improve equipment and ensure reliable Internet connection.

The Act | West program developed a supervision checklist for MDAs and DSAs to assist countries in resuming activities when appropriate. The checklist was adapted for EDC and used in Guinea, Benin, and Senegal. All countries have been able to resume activities safely, following USAID's formal approval. Act | West held debriefing meetings to report on restart activities, challenges observed and how COVID-19 prevention protocols were implemented in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal. The resumption of activities has been satisfactory in these three countries and the experience in resuming NTD activities were shared to illustrate in particular community acceptability and smooth implementation in the context of national COVID-19 mitigation measures. With support from the Act | West program, countries planned and started rolling out training and social mobilization activities. In-country teams monitored the restart of activities while enforcing SOPs and barrier measures. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Guinea, Ghana, and Senegal have implemented NTD and reported activities during the reporting period. Resuming activities under the trachoma program has been challenging. No PPE effectively protects clinical graders and avoids spreading infection without compromising visual examination. Act | West is collaborating with Act | East and Sightsavers in operational research to develop a prototype of loupe attached to a face shield that will be used in restarting the trachoma surveys.

Activity 1.1 Strengthen and Link to National Plans with Quality Data

Although the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions, Act | West was able to interact with and assist countries in conducting activities. The headquarter (HQ) and country teams reviewed DSA protocols and liaised and discussed technical issues surrounding DSA implementation. Examples include the pre-TAS in Côte d'Ivoire, trachoma desk review for mapping and OV/LF MDA in Benin, OV/SCH/STH MDA and OV stop MDA survey in Togo, and integrated OV/LF/SCH in Guinea. The technical team also provided support to review the SCH/STH data and LF pre-TAS orientation meetings in Senegal. The FHI

360 team held discussions with the Senegal country team to review SCH/STH data and investigate why some MDA coverage was above 100%. It was determined that treating old age groups, adults, and out-of-school children (especially during community MDA) might have contributed. The NTDP will be supported to improve supervision during school SCH/STH MDA and minimize out-of-target people during community MDA.

Activity 1.2 Complete Trachoma Mapping for Remaining Act | West Countries

In FY20, Act | West planned to support three activities to assist national programs complete their baseline trachoma mapping: 1) a workshop to support Benin, Cameroon, and Senegal to plan their pre-mapping desk reviews to determine whether trachoma is suspected or not in areas that have not yet undergone baseline trachoma mapping; 2) review of mapping data with the Côte d'Ivoire NTDP; and 3) discussions on potential need for operations research in Côte d'Ivoire to better understand unusual epidemiology of high trachomatous inflammation follicular (TF) and very low trachomatous trichiasis (TT).

The pre-mapping desk review meeting took place during the first reporting period. Following the meeting, the Act | West Trachoma Technical Advisor supported Benin and Senegal to develop their protocols to conduct their desk reviews. Cameroon held an initial meeting with representatives from the different regions concerned; this report was reviewed by the Act | West Trachoma Technical Advisor.

The second activity was done during the trachoma action plan meeting during the first reporting period, although further discussions will be needed following the FY21 planned baseline trachoma mapping.

Finally, discussions regarding the trachoma epidemiological situation in Côte d'Ivoire were held with WHO, Tropical Data, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Sightsavers during the first reporting period and it was agreed that operations research was needed to investigate the situation. Additionally, during the first reporting period, a plan was developed for the operations research (OR) to take place with funding from Sightsavers and technical expertise from CDC; however, those plans were interrupted in this reporting period by COVID-19. While some contingency options were discussed at the beginning of the pandemic, the best option was to conduct OR at the same time as MDA—and under the assumption that CDC would provide support. However, the trachoma MDA did not take place during the reporting period, and CDC staff are now working on COVID-19 response. As a result, there was no opportunity to conduct the OR prior to the close of FY20.

Activity 1.3 Strengthen Onchocerciasis Expert Committees (OECs) and Accelerate Implementation of OEC Guidance

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many national OEC meetings have been postponed and are expected to resume in the first quarter of FY21. Act | West has proactively supported Benin and Senegal to develop TORs for data collection, analysis, and reporting. The NTDPs in both countries need assistance collecting OV data and making them available for the OEC. They both have substantial information in various places. Some of the records and historical data and maps could be very useful for understanding the entomology and potential locations of black fly breeding sites. Once the data are assembled and made available to the OEC, Act | West will assist the NTDPs and the OECs in developing national strategic plans for OV elimination.

In August 2020, Act | West held a meeting with USAID in Ghana and reviewed the last OEC recommendations in that country. Act | West will support stop OV MDA in 60 HDs in the country. Act | West will liaise with the Ghana NTDP to discuss details of the survey implementation and preparation

for the next OEC meeting there.

In the reporting period, Togo successfully resumed its OV post-MDA survey implementation, which has been completed in the maritime region. A significant number of OV samples remain to be analyzed at the lab of the National Laboratory Institute (INH) in Lomé. The INH work on the OV survey samples has been affected by the pandemic as laboratory technicians have been re-assigned to COVID-19 activities.

Activity 1.4 Strengthen Community-Level Participation in MDA

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of activities to encourage community-level MDA participation were conducted in 6 of the 11 countries supported by Act | West (i.e., Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Togo). Many NTD messages were accompanied by additional information about efforts to prevent transmission of COVID-19, and in-person events were held in compliance with prevention measures.

In **Cameroon**, in preparation for the FY20 MDA campaign, Act | West supported the printing of posters, smocks, and other social mobilization materials to help inform communities about the MDA.

Act | West supported the FY20 MDA launch in **Côte d'Ivoire**, held in Bingerville on September 28, 2020. The launch was presided over by the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene. Additional participants included the Deputy-Mayor of Bingerville, the Departmental Director of Health of Bingerville, the National Coordinator of the PNLMTN-CP, authorities and customary chiefs of Bingerville, the WHO resident representative in Côte d'Ivoire, and representatives from USAID Côte d'Ivoire, FHI 360, and Sightsavers. Additionally, Act | West supported social mobilization via TV advertisements, local radio spots, and public criers. Information, education, and communication (IEC) materials were produced such as posters and flyers to reinforce other social mobilization efforts, caps for launch participants, and T-shirts to identify CDDs and supervisors responsible for carrying out the MDAs.

In **Guinea**, local radio stations broadcast information on the upcoming MDA, and town criers and mobile sound systems circulated to ensure all community members were informed. Community leaders provided community sensitization, and laminated boards were distributed to all CDDs. Finally, short interviews and success stories of the impact of MDA on the lives of beneficiaries were produced using professional videos and photos for broadcasting on radio and TV during the MDA.

In **Mali**, Act | West supported a workshop to develop communication tools to be used in the FY20 SCH MDA to ensure strong social mobilization in the communities. Participants included representatives of the MOH including from the LF, OV, and trachoma programs; the National Directorate of Social Development; and NGO partners such as Helen Keller, The Carter Center, World Vision, Population Services International, and Sightsavers.

In **Niger**, prior to the trachoma MDA, Act | West supported a series of one-day informational meetings with authorities (district health management teams, departmental prefects, mayors, religious and community leaders) in Diffa, Bosso, Belbeji, and Bouza HDs. During these meetings, expectations regarding implementation of social mobilization were discussed. Social mobilization activities were then conducted, including the production and broadcast of radio and TV spots and awareness-raising “caravans” that travel from village to village to provide information to communities using loudspeakers.

Sierra Leone conducted “refresher” social mobilization prior to SCH MDA, since the social mobilization that had started in the first reporting period was cut short due to COVID-19. The refresher mobilization targeted religious leaders, paramount chiefs, civil society heads, market women, section chiefs, town

chiefs, councilors, and head teachers. Women and youth groups (market women, bike riders) were also targeted to enhance participation in the MDA. Finally, discussion programs on community radio were used to increase awareness of the MDA campaign and encourage participation.

Act | West supported **Togo** to provide community mobilization in advance of the OV/SCH/STH MDA. Activities included use of town criers, local radio spots, and flip charts. Additionally, administrative authorities at the regional, district, and community levels were asked to promote participation in the MDA, and religious authorities spread messages in churches and mosques.

Activity 1.5 Deliver MDA in Endemic Areas, and Ensure that Hotspots, Conflict Areas, and Hard-to-Reach Populations Have Adequate Coverage

With approval to resume activities beginning in July 2020, four countries conducted MDA, as described below.

Benin: Integrated LF/OV MDA was conducted in four LF districts and three OV districts from March 29 to April 8, 2020. The MDA was the third MDA for the three districts that are co-endemic for LF and OV and the second for the fourth district (Covè) that is endemic for LF. The recommendation from the TAS1 failure investigation were implemented to achieve high treatment coverage. Epidemiological coverage for the four districts that failed TAS1 in 2018 ranged from 84.1% to 87.4%, with an average epidemiological coverage of 85.8%. A total of 262,386 persons were treated out of 307,229 targeted. The government introduced COVID-19 restrictions almost at the same time the MDA started. The program received approval to complete the MDA while following COVID-19 prevention measures. Field supervision and coordination were done by local health managers and health workers with remote support from the central-level NTD team. Key mitigation measures—including a sanitary belt around the capital city (Cotonou)—were implemented and proved to be effective in avoiding spread of infection from highly affected areas to other districts upcountry.

Côte d’Ivoire: OV-only MDA was conducted in 20 districts from September 28, 2020, to October 2, 2020. Collation of results is ongoing.

Guinea: An integrated LF/OV/SCH/STH MDA was conducted in 19 HDs and a trachoma MDA in one HD (Dinguiraye). The MDA was conducted in three phases from August 28, 2020, to October 2, 2020. Integrated LF/OV/SCH/STH MDA were conducted in 9 HDs in the first phase (August 20–25, 2020) and 10 HDs in the second phase (August 30, 2020 to September 4, 2020). Finally, trachoma MDA in Dinguiraye HD was conducted from September 27, 2020, to October 2, 2020. Collation of results are ongoing and expected to be available by end of October 2020.

Togo: The first round of integrated OV/SCH/STH MDA was conducted September 8–19, 2020. It included 36 OV districts, 34 SCH, and 39 STH districts. The rapid coverage surveys that Togo carries out after each MDA took place from September 28, 2020, to October 2, 2020. Any treatment gaps identified were to be addressed through a mop up. The team also used this period to ensure that unused drugs were appropriately managed and accounted for. Final MDA results are expected in December 2020.

Activity 1.6 Support Disease-Specific Assessments (DSAs) for Program Monitoring

Act | West supported pre-TAS in Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal. In Togo, the OV epidemiological survey in Togo which was suspended in March was completed. The remaining DSAs are scheduled for the first quarter of FY21. Additionally, given concerns over proximity between surveyors and participants, all trachoma DSAs remain on hold.

Benin: Act | West funded pre-re-TAS in the four HDs that failed TAS1 in FY18. The pre-re-TAS was conducted September 26–28, 2020, and included communities where children who tested positive in the failed TAS1 lived and schooled. All four HDs passed the survey, with no positive cases recorded out of 3,703 persons surveyed (3,600 persons were targeted). The ESPEN Collect platform was used to capture the data. Act | West has rolled out a COVID-19 DSA supervision checklist using the ESPEN Collect platform to ensure COVID-19 SOPs and barrier measures were followed during the field survey. Further analysis of the survey results is ongoing.

Côte d’Ivoire: Act | West funded and provided technical support for the first pre-TAS in the country, involving 46 HDs. After the initial training of survey teams and supervisors in March 2020, the field work was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On August 4, 2020, a one-day refresher training was conducted for the survey teams and supervisors, followed by a field practical session on the use of filariasis test strips (FTS) in one of the selected sites. Field data collection took place August 25, 2020, to September 14, 2020, with support from a local consultant and remote monitoring by the Act | West LF focal person. The ESPEN Collect platform was used to capture the data. Preliminary results show that 37 out of the 46 HDs passed the pre-TAS. Only one site (sentinel or spot check) failed in each of the nine districts that failed the survey, recording a site prevalence range of 2.0% to 6.3%. Act | West is supporting the country to conduct further analysis of the data in order to finalize the report.

Ghana: The NTDP conducted pre-re-TAS in the Upper West region (4 HDs) and Upper East region (1 HD) September 3–9, 2020. A total of 4,484 people were tested in the 5 HDs, with 100 people testing positive. The site prevalence range was 0–5.5%. Only one HD (Jirapa) passed, with 0.4% and 1.0% in the two sites, respectively. In three out of the four districts that failed the survey, one survey site recorded FTS prevalence less than 2.0%, while in the fourth district, both sites recorded FTS prevalence higher than the 2.0%. Act | West will support NTDP to further analyze the data and take measures for the next steps.

Senegal: Training for pre-TAS in all 14 HDs targeted was completed in September 2020. Field data collection was conducted from September 14–24, 2020, in 7 HDs in Tambacounda and Kolda regions. The remaining 7 HDs (in Diourbel and Thies regions) are expected to be completed by the end of October 2020. Preliminary results of the survey indicate that all 7 HDs where data collection was initially completed have passed the survey.

Togo: OV epidemiological surveys collecting dried blood spot for OV16 ELISA, were conducted in 12 districts in the Plateaux region, targeting villages with persistently higher prevalence of OV and a random selection of other villages that have not been evaluated since 2015. The survey, which was suspended after one week of data collection in March 2020 due to the pandemic, resumed on July 27, 2020, and was completed on August 3, 2020. A total of 5,302 children were surveyed in 84 villages in the 12 districts. Completion of OV epidemiological data sample collection in the Plateaux regions completes OV data collection in all five regions of the country. Analysis of samples is ongoing, together with the back log of samples from other regions.

Activity 1.7 Improve the Quality of NTD Interventions through QA/QI

The Act | West program planned a series of activities to improve MDAs and DSAs in FY20, including the following:

1. Improving the performance of NTD interventions through Quality improvement (QI):

- QI workshop at HQ to inform the consortium technical lead team on the QI model to be implemented throughout Act | West program
 - Roll out of QI model in Benin, Sierra Leone, and Niger
- 2. Quality assurance (QA) activities:
 - Facilitate (under guidance of LF technical lead) a regional LF DSA Workshop to share best practices and ensure high quality of LF impact assessments
 - Review MDA training materials
 - Support countries (in collaboration with MEL) to improve data quality by providing NTDPs with the NTD toolbox, providing orientation on the tools, and coaching program managers
- 3. Severe adverse events (SAEs) management: Improve the management of SAEs with strong emphasis on ensuring proper response to SAEs should they occur, including communication strategy, proper detection, reporting, and investigation

The SAR1 report covered the QI HQ workshop, LF DSA regional workshop, and the improvement of SAE management. Status of the remainder of the activities is described in the subsections immediately below. In addition, while waiting for the resumption of field activities, several preparatory activities were conducted, including the following:

- Translation into French and support for dissemination of WHO COVID-19 interim guidelines to the French-speaking countries (under the lead of the Communications Team)
- Assessment of Internet connections for NTDPs and IPs—HKI, HDI, FHI 360—necessary to support sustained remote technical support to the 11 program countries. Act | West provided financial support to address any needed improvements at the respective offices.
- Development of COVID-19 checklists based on country NTDP's COVID-19 related mitigations measures as recommended by WHO and country COVID taskforce. (Two types of checklists—one for MDA and one for DSA implementation) are to be completed during field supervision.

Improving the performance of NTD interventions through QI

The FHI 360 Implementation Management Lead collaborated with the HKI Quality Implementation Lead in developing an Act | West QI training module for coaches. The module includes the training TORs, detailed agenda items, and slide presentations by QI themes.

The FHI 360 Implementation Management Lead conducted the QI training rollout for **Benin** coaches remotely. The training module (developed previously) was used to train nine QI coaches, who in turn will support QI activities in four selected OV/LF districts that failed TAS1. One of the training outcomes was development of a detailed QI action plan that was shared with the NTDP for adoption and implementation. The QI activities will help achieve high coverage for integrated NTD MDA by systematically addressing data quality issues.

As part of QI rollout activities in **Sierra Leone**, Act | West supported the NTDP to conduct a rapid assessment of enhanced community engagement in nine LF hotspot villages. The goal is to encourage community cooperation and mitigate fears of blood sampling and drug administration. The assessment will help determine key community influencers and identify channels of information that lead to rumors and generate hesitancy in communities to participate in DSAs and MDAs. These community influencers and channels of information will subsequently be targeted for sensitization in the forthcoming pre-TAS and OV MDA. The results of the rapid assessment will be analyzed in October 2020 and utilized in the sensitization strategy for the pre-TAS and OV MDA (and ultimately to determine performance for QI

activities).

In **Niger** the planned FY20 QI initiation activities were postponed and incorporated into the FY21 work plan.

During the September 2020 NNN conference, NTDP Managers from Ghana and Sierra Leone presented their experiences planning and conducting QI activities to improve NTDP performance.

Quality assurance activities

An MDA checklist piloted in Guinea (and reported in the SAR1) provided the basis for reviewing MDA training materials. The checklist was improved and sent to several countries in order to collect and review SOPs, action plans, and MDA training materials. The MDA training materials from Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Benin were reviewed and feedback provided to improve upcoming MDA implementation. The Act | West Program also advised national programs to consult the NTD Toolbox as reference materials during the process.

Act | West organized a webinar facilitated by ESPEN on the new strategy for the SCH district treatment data management and how to forecast the need for medicines. The webinar was intended for the consortium IP technical teams so they could in turn provide technical support to country NTDPs. Updates on the new functionalities of ESPEN Collect were also shared with IPs.

Severe adverse events (SAEs)

No SAE was reported in any country during this reporting period.

Activity 1.8 Improve Cross-Border Collaboration, Focusing on Specific Districts with High Prevalence and Shared Borders

All 11 countries in the Act | West portfolio closed their borders as part of restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and most countries still have land borders closed. Consequently, cross-border meetings for Benin/Togo, Guinea/Sierra Leone, and Ghana/Côte d'Ivoire scheduled during the reporting period did not take place and have been rescheduled for FY21. The delays in implementing OV activities across countries has had a cascaded effect on the ability of NTDPs to get valuable data for conducting well-informed and fruitful cross-border meetings.

Activity 1.9 Ensure Use of the Integrated Database for Data Management, Tracking of Trends, Drug Applications, and Data Archiving

The FHI 360 disease-specific leads and the Implementation Management Lead have provided TA to the NTDPs to ensure optimal quality of MDAs and DSAs scheduled during the reporting period. The Act | West program teams have worked with in-country staff, including M&E staff and partners, to ensure collected data are properly stored and secured in databases managed by the NTDPs. The security and accessibility of these data sources are critical for dossier development. The MEL teams in Ghana and Niger provided TA related to database management and maintenance, including acquisition of necessary external hard drives for backs-ups and/or new laptops (see MEL section.)

Activity 1.10 Support Countries to Prepare Dossiers on LF, Trachoma, and Onchocerciasis

Benin: Act | West, in collaboration with the PNLMT, developed TORs for a consultant to write a first draft of the country LF dossier. A candidate has been selected by a joint panel of Act | West and PNLMT staff. The consultant is expected to produce a first full draft of the dossier in the first quarter of FY21.

Burkina Faso: The NTDP continued work at the program level writing a first draft of the trachoma elimination dossier. However, planned workshops on the trachoma and LF dossiers have been delayed until the first quarter of FY21.

Cameroon: The PNLO conducted two meetings to assess implementation of recommendations and assigned tasks from the LF elimination dossier development workshop in February 2020. The first meeting (on June 18, 2020) was virtual, while the second (on July 17, 2020) was in person and was conducted observing COVID-19 prevention measures. As a result of these meetings, the PNLO has assembled about 70% of the data and reports required for the dossier preparation, including data on DSAs and MDAs. Outstanding information includes vector control activities in the country, reports and data on population migration due to the conflict in the western part of the country, and endemicity and status of districts in neighboring countries. The meetings were attended by all key stakeholders, including the Center for Research on Filariasis and other Tropical Diseases (CRFILMT), the PNLO, Helen Keller–Cameroon, International Eye Foundation (IEF), PersPective, the MOH Central Coordination Unit (CCU), and Sightsavers. A small working group comprising the PNLO, CCU, IEF, and Helen Keller have been tasked to start putting together a first draft of the LF elimination dossier.

Guinea: Act | West in-country partner Helen Keller facilitated an introductory meeting on the trachoma elimination dossier. The meeting was conducted via teleconference on May 28, 2020. The main objective was to prepare Guinea for the trachoma elimination dossier process and to underline the progress made in terms of trachoma elimination objectives. The meeting made the following recommendations:

- All partners and organizations should make all trachoma data in their possession (including data about WASH) available to the national program.
- The program should assess the data received, identify, and take steps to obtain missing data.
- The program should develop a post elimination surveillance and management strategy to identify and manage incident TT patients in the post-validation phase.
- The program should set up the trachoma elimination dossier preparation committee.
- The program should define the periodicity of meetings to follow up the preparation of the trachoma elimination dossier.

The meeting was attended by 25 participants from the MOH, USAID/Washington, Helen Keller–HQ, Helen Keller–Regional, Helen Keller–Guinea, FHI 360, Sightsavers–HQ, and Sightsavers–Guinea.

Togo: The PNMTN, with support from and in collaboration with the WHO team, completed the review and re-submission of Togo’s trachoma dossier to WHO. Following the resubmission, the PNMTN received some additional questions and participated in a discussion with WHO and the dossier review group to discuss areas to strengthen the dossier.

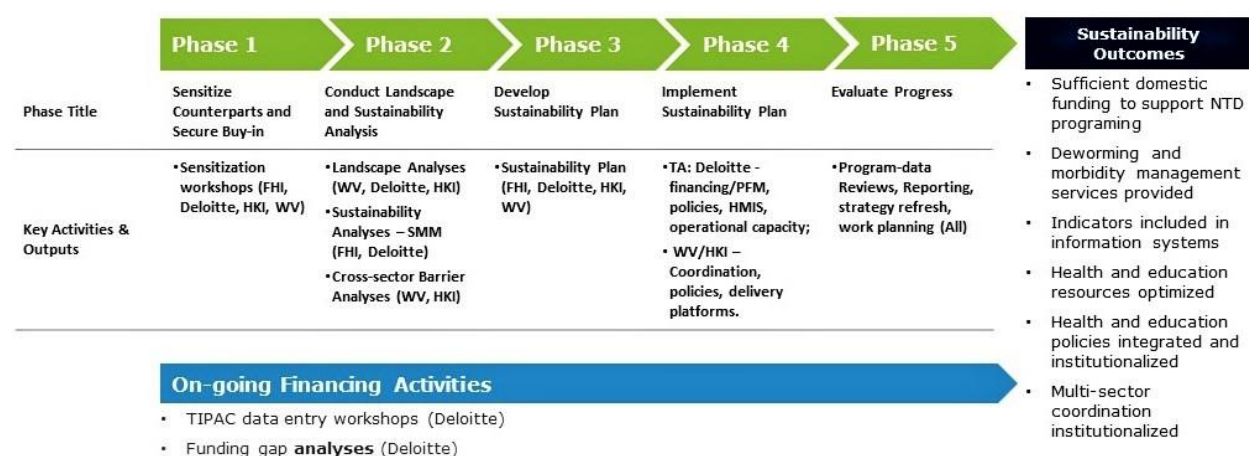
IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL— PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES

The Act | West sustainability related interventions aim at ensuring that each “national health system has the needed capacity and commitment to maintain the provision of NTDS interventions/services at levels that will continue progression toward control or elimination of diseases in accordance with national NTD goals.” Act | West continued its focus on supporting host countries to engage national counterparts effectively in fostering intra-sector and multi-sector

collaboration around sustainability planning and to lay out the foundations to sustain NTDs gains and long-term control objectives. Bringing actors whose work is relevant for NTDs into the sustainability planning and enhancing high-level endorsements of the process are necessary steps to develop a sustainability plan, prioritize interventions, and define approaches for the two interrelated strategies—i.e., mainstreaming NTDs into the health system and institutionalizing cross-sectoral collaboration for NTD activities.

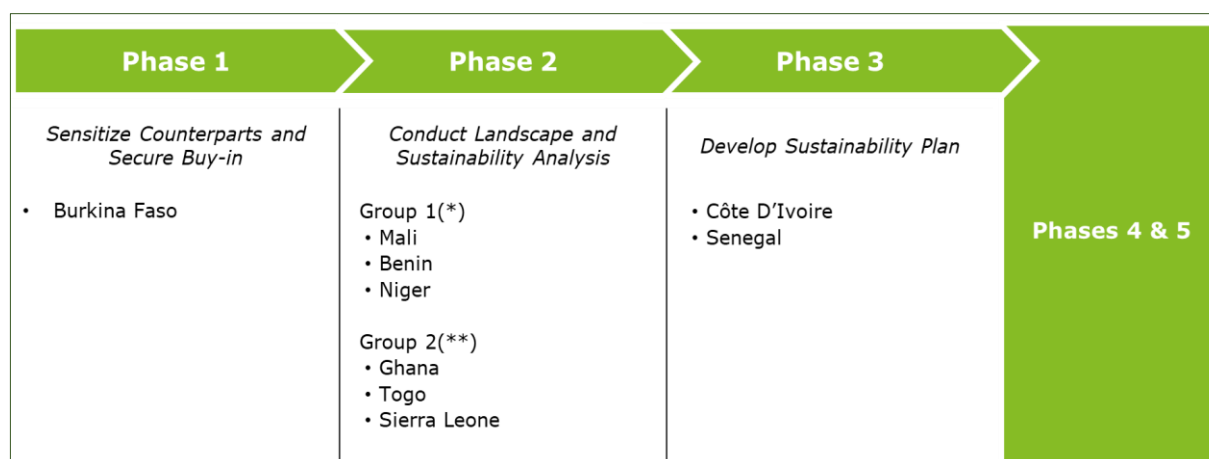
Technical Approach Towards Sustainability Planning: In early FY20, Act | West built upon the USAID sustainability framework co-created by Act | West, Act | East, and USAID as outlined in the working paper, “USAID NTD Program: Framework and Strategy for the Promotion of Sustainability.” Operationalizing and implementing the sustainability framework required developing approaches and tools to guide country teams across the five phases of sustainability (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Act | West phased sustainability approach



Phase 1 focuses on introducing key sustainability framework concepts to national stakeholders via sensitization meetings and building buy-in across stakeholders. **Phase 2** consists of a landscape analysis, guided self-assessment using the Sustainability Maturity Model (SMM), and cross-sector assessments to deepen collective understanding of the current state and identify future sustainability milestones and recommendations. **Phase 3** is the development of a comprehensive and actionable sustainability plan for each country to serve as a national roadmap for achieving the six sustainability milestones and outcomes identified for the elimination and control of NTDs. **Phase 4** and **Phase 5** focus on implementing the plans and measuring progress. Figure 2 below provides a snapshot of where each country in the Act | West portfolio is in this process as of the end of FY20.

Figure 2: Country Progress in the Act | West phased sustainability approach



Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal have completed their sustainability plans and are preparing political validation meetings in October (Côte d'Ivoire) and December (Senegal). These two countries will move to phase 4 in Q1 of FY21.

Ghana, Togo, and Sierra Leone have initiated phase 3—development of a comprehensive and actionable sustainability plan. Plans have been drafted for all three countries. Act | West is providing support to the NTDPs to refine the initial drafts and prepare the sustainability planning workshops.

Mali, Niger, and Benin are still in phase 2. They have completed the landscape and barrier analyses. SMM is anticipated to be completed in the coming months prior to starting phase 3. These assessments are providing a deep collective understanding of the current state and helping to identify future sustainability milestones and recommendations.

Summary of Key Achievements

Implementation of IR/S activities during the reporting period was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has slowed several countries' progress in advancing through the five phases. In addition to travel restrictions and social distancing policies, which limited TA delivery, many of the NTDPs were involved in national COVID-response operations and therefore had less time to dedicate to sustainability work. Several activities planned for this period were postponed to FY21. Despite the logistical hurdles presented to implementation of FY20 work plans, the Act | West team was able to maintain engagement and continue with a few key activities, while deferring others to FY21.

Over the past six months, Act | West, in collaboration with NTDPs, achieved the following key milestones:

1. Provided continued support to all country programs to advance the **implementation of the FY20 work plan through virtual engagement methods**. Facilitated a series of virtual financial data entry and analysis in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Sierra Leone using the Tool for Integrated Planning & Costing (TIPAC). Conducted several remote sessions with NTDPs in Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo to collaborate on the Sustainability Plan drafting process.
2. Leveraged findings from landscape analyses and collaborated with NTDPs to implement workshops to share findings and gather critical data; drafted **joint landscape analyses** for Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana,

Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo synthesizing key findings from health systems strengthening (HSS) and cross-sector analyses, to provide a snapshot of NTD priorities and challenges for sustainability in these countries.

3. Facilitated technical preparations and material development for the successful **Sustainability Planning Workshop** in Senegal on September 22–25. This included the development of the draft Sustainability Plan, preparing presentations, developing facilitation materials, and facilitating group discussion to reach consensus during the day four of the workshop.
4. Led material development for the **Sustainability Plan Political Validation Meeting** with high-level government officials in Côte d'Ivoire, scheduled for October 8. This included the translation of the Côte d'Ivoire Sustainability Plan from French to English and the development of the presentation and briefing materials on the Sustainability Framework, key priorities outlined in the Sustainability Plan, and critical next steps for implementing key priorities.
5. Continued providing TA to NTDPs for the **revitalization or establishment of a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism** for NTDs. These series of activities included facilitating the roadmap development workshop in Niger, supporting the development of TORs in Ghana, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, and coordinating follow up with the NTDPs in Ghana and Senegal regarding the administrative processes for ministerial endorsement and approval.
6. Participated in various internal **conferences and webinars** (WHO webinar on WASH, NNN conference, COR-NTDs pre-sessions) to highlight country progress towards sustainability planning and Act to End technical support to NTDPs and contribution to sustainability agenda.

Activity 2.1: Pursue Collaboration with USAID to Promote the NTDs Sustainability Framework and Strategy

The joint landscape analysis provides relevant stakeholders with a detailed snapshot of NTD sustainability challenges and opportunities for advancing sustainability in a country. In the latter half of FY20, Act | West used the insights gained from the sustainability assessments (landscape analyses, barrier analyses for cross-sector collaboration, financial gaps analyses, Guided Self-Assessment workshops), to develop joint landscape analysis profiles for Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. These profiles present key next steps and opportunities for advancing sustainability as follows:

- In **Côte d'Ivoire**, NTD **strategy and policies** are outlined in the National Health Development Plan (*Plan National de Développement Sanitaire–PNDS*) and the NTDP's five-year strategic plan (*Plan Directeur National de Lutte Contre Les Maladies Tropicales Négligées [2016–2020]*). These documents prioritize NTD activities, demonstrating commitment to NTD sustainability and mainstreaming into national policy and planning, as well as strengthening the technical capacity of health structures for the management of NTD-related morbidities. As a next step, the NTDP aims to ensure that NTD data are securely managed in the national system based on the six dimensions of data quality (accuracy, completeness, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness). The mainstreaming and performance review framework will also help raise awareness of the NTDP's plans to routinely use NTD data in the district health information system 2 (DHIS2) to inform decision making. Development of the new PNDS, starting in late 2020, and the new NTDs master plan (2021–2025) are also opportunities to further push the sustainability agenda.

- In **Ghana**, health sector strategy and policies are driven by the Health Sector Medium Term Development Plan, in which the overall objective is to bridge equity gaps in access to quality health, mental health, and nutrition care and services. The Master Plan for Neglected Tropical Diseases (2016–2020) guides stakeholders in implementing NTD control, elimination, and eradication activities and aims to build capacity of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to establish an integrated NTDP. An important next step is to increase NTDP access to community volunteers by standardizing community volunteer reimbursement rates across government programs. The NTDP already uses a standardized rate for all community volunteers implementing national control and elimination programs. Because better-resourced government programs pay community volunteers at a higher rate, the NTDP cannot attract sufficient community volunteers for its programs. A standard approach to reimbursing volunteers across government programs would resolve this problem.
- In several countries, NTD master plans are up for renewal in 2020, presenting an opportunity for increased focus on NTD sustainability. In all of the cases detailed below, the NTDPs will begin the process of refreshing these plans during the last three months of 2020 using the WHO's updated template and guidance.
- In **Senegal**, the NTDP's master plan for 2016–2020 will be updated in 2020. The plan includes provisions for budget projections to achieve the program's elimination goals. Moreover, a special section on NTDs is included in the Ministry of Health and Social Action's (MSAS) National Health and Social Development Plan (*PNDSS 2019–2028: Plan National de Développement Sanitaire et Social*), which establishes a roadmap of inclusive strategies to improve the socioeconomic and living conditions of the Senegalese population. As a next step, the NTDP plans to engage key health sector and cross-sector stakeholders in the process of updating the NTD five-year Master Plan. This engagement will enable an updated approach in line with the most current resource needs and targeted funding sources, WHO guidance, intersections with key stakeholders, and a clear path towards sustainability.
- In **Sierra Leone**, NTD strategies are driven by the NTD Master Plan, which outlines key objectives to mainstream NTD programming across the country and ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the national NTDP. The current Master Plan ends in 2020 and the NTDP is in the process of developing a new version for the period 2021–2025. The NTDP aims to advocate for the integration of NTDs across health and non-health sector policies and strategies and has identified a few inter-sectoral partners outside the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to mobilize support. Updating the Master Plan will create an opportunity to revisit elimination timeline, post-elimination resources, and operational needs and integrate the plan into broader national health strategic planning.
- In **Togo**, NTD **strategy and policies** are outlined in the NTDP's five-year strategic plan (*Plan Directeur National de Lutte Intégrée contre les Maladies Tropicales Négligées [2016–2020]*), which aims to accelerate the prevention, control, elimination, or eradication of the country's ten NTDs. The current strategic plan ends in 2020 and will be updated towards the end of 2020. There is an opportunity for the NTDP to incorporate more accurate financial forecasts in the 2021–2025 plan. The NTDP specifically requested assistance in forecasting costs for this purpose.
- Lastly, **Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo** are members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (*Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine [UEMOA]*), which mandated that all countries move towards using a program budget for NTDs (*budget-programme ou budget de resultats*) rather than the traditional line budget (*budget classique or budget de moyens*). In **Togo**, the MOH received support from WHO for this transition, which is still

underway. The country expects to switch to a program budget in 2021. With the new budgeting system, there has been greater emphasis on program effectiveness and performance. Programs will also be required to project their budget needs over three years. The TIPAC analysis that forecasts program costs will be pertinent for helping the program request funding as Togo moves to this new budget model.

Activity 2.2: Create Sustainability Plan in Partnership with Host Country Governments (IR2/IR3)

Faced with social restriction during the reporting period, Act | West shifted to providing virtual and remote technical supports to host governments. The FHI 360 HSS team, World Vision, Deloitte, and HKI hosted virtual meetings to prepare for country Sustainability Plan development in Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. While some planned program activities could be conducted on virtual platforms, Act | West, in consultation with NTDPs, decided that country-driven events involving cross-sector stakeholders would be best held in person.

In countries where restrictions were lifted and staff were ready to continue planned sustainability work, Act | West combined remote support and in-country visits by its regional team and in-country teams to conduct the sustainability planning workshops. Once restrictions were eased in Senegal and the NTDP was available and eager to move forward with the Sustainability Planning workshop in September, Deloitte and World Vision used weekly planning meetings to work closely with the FHI 360 regional team, Act | West team in Senegal, and the NTDP to prepare in-country facilitators with facilitation materials and talking points—leveraging lessons learned and insights from the experience in Côte d'Ivoire. Act | West is providing ongoing support to the Côte d'Ivoire NTDP to prepare for the political validation of the Sustainability Plan (developed in March). This includes coordination with USAID on communication and high-level sensitization, WHO involvement, and support from the USAID mission. As of the writing of this report, the political validation meeting is scheduled for October 8. Further details on these activities included the following: In preparation for phase 3, Act | West developed **sustainability plan templates** along the six outcomes of sustainability framework and shared with the NTDPs for initial discussion and customization. Zero-draft Sustainability Plans for **Ghana, Senegal, and Sierra Leone** were initiated and populated based on landscape analyses, barrier analyses, and SMM findings. These have been the basis of the monthly virtual meeting held with respective NTDPs to garner and maintain momentum built during phase 2.

The **Senegal Sustainability Planning Workshop**, which took place September 22–25, was seen by participants as a success. The 26 participants, including NTDP staff and the Direction de Lutte contre la Maladie (DLM), the representative of the School Medical Control Division of the National Ministry of Education, the Technical Advisor of the Minister of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, were fully engaged and provided critical input to development of the plan.

Key highlights, lessons learned, and next steps include:

- *NTDP Staff Ownership:* On completing the Sustainability Planning Workshop, the NTDP staff consolidated discussions of the interventions and activities and produced a complete draft of the Sustainability Plan. Act | West will work with the NTDP to support its finalization (incorporating discussion comments into the draft plan for review, identifying NTD focal points within other sectors and ministries, developing the budgeted action plan, finalizing the narrative) and help the NTDP focal points with other sectors and ministries, developing the budgeted action plan, finalizing the narrative) and help the NTDP prepare for the political validation meeting, currently planned for December 2020.



Sustainability Plan Development Workshop in Dakar, Senegal, at Hotel Ndiambour

- *Senior MOH Engagement:* The need to strengthen coordination within both the MOH and the DLM were key topics emerging from the Sustainability Workshop. The DLM emphasized pushing for coordination of the national NTDP with each of the five PC NTD programs to ensure alignment on program activities.
- *Cross-Sector Engagement:* The NTDP plans to establish a multi-sectoral committee for the fight against NTDs. Consequently, it anticipates working closely with cross-sector stakeholders in the development of national multi-sectoral committees.

Act | West provided a complete version of the **Côte d'Ivoire** Sustainability Plan to USAID for review and will share the refined version of the **Senegal** Sustainability Plan in early November.

Activity 2.3: Operationalize the Finance Strategy for NTD Control and Elimination Interventions (IR2)

By mid-FY20, Act | West had supported six Act | West countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo) in the use of TIPAC to understand program costs and funding gaps. As part of the TIPAC data analysis workshop in Togo, Deloitte introduced the Public Financial Management (PFM) toolkit, which led to a better understanding of the national budgeting cycle.

While several planned activities for the second half of FY20 had to be postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19, Act | West was able to make progress on this activity in two ways. First, Deloitte collaborated with the Helen Keller team in **Sierra Leone** to conduct a series of virtual TIPAC data entry and analysis sessions through monthly virtual meetings from March to August 2020. With Deloitte's virtual support, the **Sierra Leone** NTDP analyzed their financial data for FY20, which yielded the following:

- The initial FY20 TIPAC analysis showed that the majority of NTDP spending is allocated to MDA drug registration. Activities such as strategic planning, M&E, and advocacy were allocated the lowest

proportion of funding in FY20—although these are critical to NTD sustainability. During the session, discussion centered on spending more on non-MDA activities (through government funds), particularly in advocacy (which accounted for less than one percent of the program’s budget). The NTDP recognized that possible cost savings in the overall budget could allow the program to stretch resources to accomplish more non-MDA activities.

- The NTDP plans to finalize FY20 data entry prior to the next virtual training session in order to conduct further analysis and understand the program’s funding gaps.

Second, Deloitte worked with regional HSSs to design and facilitate virtual TIPAC data entry and analysis remote sessions for the Helen Keller in-country teams in **Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger** from May to July. The World Vision in-country teams participated in the sessions in Mali and Niger. The objective of these trainings was to equip the country teams to facilitate the TIPAC data entry workshops themselves, with their respective country NTDPs and in collaboration with the regional HSSs—given that the Deloitte team is restricted from travelling to Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger for security reasons. For all sessions, Deloitte redesigned materials so the virtual training sessions were engaging for NTDP staff and used practical ‘homework’ and follow-ups, to ensure that key personnel—such as the finance and M&E staff who will be owning TIPAC data entry moving forward—had the chance to absorb and apply the information independently.

Activity 2.4: Explore Alternative In-Country Financing Mechanisms to Mobilize Domestic Resources, Diversify Sources of Funding, and Increase Resources for NTDs (IR2)

Deloitte continued collaborating with the CDC to improve and test the Economic Impact Model. Helen Keller, Deloitte, and the CDC, in consultation with the Sierra Leone NTDP, developed a disease-specific Economic Impact Model for LF to enable the NTDP to estimate the economic impact of LF interventions and use results to incentivize domestic resource mobilization. Key activities and highlights of the work performed include the following:

- Deloitte supported creation of the first iteration of the dashboard and its underlying models to enable the NTDP end user to easily access and interpret results of the Economic Impact Model for use in advocacy with stakeholders in the MOH, Ministry of Finance, Parliament, and the private sector.
- Deloitte and CDC worked together to design features in the dashboard and its underlying models to enable the NTDP end user to generate and save various funding scenarios and, therefore, develop investment cases for advocacy with stakeholders.
- Deloitte socialized the Economic Impact Model with the Helen Keller Sierra Leone country team and engaged them for input in its development. The team also presented the model at the 2020 NNN Conference and to USAID in September.
- In Q1 of FY21, Act | West will discuss next steps for application and deployment of the Economic Impact Model, based on USAID feedback and Act | West internal discussions, to better align the development of NTDs investment case with the sustainability priorities and country agenda.

Activity 2.5: Implement Advocacy Plan for the Integration of NTDs into National Policies, Financing Decisions, and Coordinating Mechanisms (IR2/IR3)

No interventions planned for the reporting period. Advocacy TA will be driven by country Sustainability Plans.

Activity 2.6: Review NTD Indicators and Support the Integration of Recommended Indicators into the National HIMS (IR2)

No TA was provided. This activity was conducted by country team with support from the MOH/HMIS team (see country SARs).

Activity 2.7: Revise Job Descriptions to Fulfil Essential NTD Activities (IR2)

No activity was planned in FY20 in this area.

Activity 2.8: Improve Supply Chain through Targeted Solutions and Approaches (IR2)

For FY20, Act | West planned to continue support to improve supply chain (SC) processes and actively advocate for follow-up information from the joint request for special medicines (JRSM) submissions to be shared with country NTDPs in a timely fashion and TA to be provided. This is critical to avoid any disruption in the MDA timeline. During the reporting period, ESPEN and WHO HQ both copied the FHI 360 Supply Chain Specialist on all communication related to the JRSMs of the 11 supported countries. These pertained mainly to praziquantel (PRQ), albendazole (ALB), and ivermectin (IVR). By the same token, the International Trachoma Initiative (ITI), which manages the Zithromax (ZTH) donation, has copied the Act | West Supply Chain Specialist in all drug request applications.

As part of the plan for FY20, Act | West is updating the related SC manual and SOPs and conducting trainings of all personnel involved in drug management. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all planned NTD outreach activities were postponed in March. The pandemic also disrupted the shipments of donated drugs. Nevertheless, during the period of report:

- Act | West developed a tracker to monitor in-country delivery and transport of donated and procured NTD medicines. In addition, a physical inventory form was developed to collect PC NTD medicines' situation from the 11 countries supported by the consortium. From the information collected, a summary table regarding the 11 countries was developed and made available to USAID for decisions about activity resumption.
- Act | West supported review by countries of the ESPEN's SC SOPs, originally developed by the SC Forum (which includes FHI 360). The Act | West Supply Chain Specialist helped facilitate the webinar to introduce the SOPs to countries mainly in AFRO region. Supply chain specialists and program managers from the 11 supported countries' participated in the webinar.

Since the reverse logistic SOPs review is still ongoing with ESPEN as lead, Act | West postponed the webinar on this topic originally planned for FY20. The review is scheduled to be completed by early Q3 FY21. Act | West will organize the webinar as soon as the process is finalized, with facilitation by USAID and ESPEN supply chain specialists.

No supply chain mainstreaming interventions were planned for the reporting period. SC mainstreaming will be driven by country Sustainability Plans and USAID co-investment agreements with the MOHs.

Activity 2.9: Support the Creation and Review and/or Update of Actionable SCH, STH, and OV Transition Plans (IR3)

The Act | West program OV Focal Person held discussions in July and August with the **Benin and Senegal** NTDPs to develop plans for revamping the OEC (Senegal) and collating historical epidemiological and entomological data (Benin). TORs have been developed for local TA providers to assist with the data

collection, compilation, and review in the two countries. FHI 360 will further support both countries to develop draft plans for national OV elimination.

The MEL Team and the SCH/STH Focal Point, in collaboration with **Ghana and Togo** NTDPs, have reviewed SCH data to assist the countries in planning for the SCH/STH impact surveys (especially in selecting districts). The results of the impact surveys will help guide decisions for the upcoming SCH/STH committee meetings—especially for new planning of control and or elimination of SCH in the two countries. Likewise, FHI 360 anticipates supporting review of Senegal SCH/STH data and establishing a national SCH/STH elimination committee.

Activity 2.10: Identify and Implement Sustainable NTD Delivery Platforms (IR3)

During the reporting period, Act | West finalized the reports for the stakeholder landscape and barrier analyses in **Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo**—incorporating feedback from the respective NTDPs as well as from the cross-sector stakeholders during the dissemination and validation workshops. In each country, the barrier analysis findings identified several service delivery platforms with potential to sustain long-term MDA coverage and prevention messages. The findings will facilitate identifying the most appropriate collaborative frameworks for mutually beneficial service integration and programmatic mechanisms/platforms.

Activity 2.11: Deliver Integrated or Stand-Alone MDAs for SCH and STH in High Endemic Areas (IR3)

This activity was not a focus area during the reporting period.

Activity 2.12: Incorporate Integrated MDAs into Policy and Planning Documents (IR3)

No activities were planned for the reporting period. Actions in line with this activity will be driven by country Sustainability Plans and USAID co-investment agreements with MOHs.

Activity 2.13: Provide TA to the MOH on Drug Applications and Drug Donations (IR3)

During the reporting period, Act | West organized a webinar facilitated by the ESPEN Data Manager and colleagues on the new strategy for the SCH subdistrict treatment data management and how to forecast the need for medicines. The webinar was intended for Act | West IP (HKI, HDI, FHI 360) technical leads so they could in turn assist MOHs to submit quality drug request applications (see Activity 1.7).

Activity 2.14: Conduct and/or Integrate Sustainable Surveillance Activities (IR3)

See IR1 section for surveillance activities. Approaches and long-term strategies for integrated surveillance will be defined in country Sustainability Plans.

Activity 2.15: Establish and Institutionalize Multi-Sectoral Mechanisms to Coordinate NTD Programs (IR3)

During the reporting period, Act | West supported **Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone** to draft and finalize TORs for the multi-sector coordination mechanisms and to secure ministerial approval for their revitalization or establishment.

- **Ghana Intra-Country Coordination Committee (ICCC) for NTDs:** In April 2020, the NTDP organized a small working group to review the ICCC draft TOR, and World Vision incorporated all inputs obtained. After multiple rounds of review by key cross-sector stakeholders for technical quality

In case of reply the number
And the date of this
Letter should be quoted

My Ref. No. MOH/MF/CVDP/02
Tel No. 630978163

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
P O BOX MB-44
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20TH JULY, 2020

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

GHANA HEALTH SERVICE
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GHANA HEALTH SERVICE
Received
22 July 2020
DIRECTOR GENERAL

GHANA HEALTH SERVICE
RECEIVED
22 JUL 2020
DIRECTOR GENERAL

RE-BYAMING THE INTRA-COUNTRY COORDINATING COMMITTEE (ICCC)

Reference is made to your letter No. GHS-PHPD/p dated 22nd June, 2020 to Hon. Ministry regarding the above subject matter.

We write to inform you that, the Ministry is giving you it's approval and support to carry with this project.

We count on your usual cooperation.

Thank you;

HON. DR. BERNARD OKOYE BOYE
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR HEALTH
FOR MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Cc:
The Minister for Health
The Hon. Deputy Minister, MOH
The Ag. Chief Director, MOH

*Dr. A. N. D.
for your info &
important action.
Sent by email
22/07/2020*

*Dr. A. N. D.
for your info &
important action.
Sent by email
22/07/2020*

28/7/2020
Sam, APP Adm, Rk Inform the
Governer

Scanned with CamScanner

ICCC approval letter from GHS

- Through September 2020, Act | West supported preparatory activities for the **ICCC Work plan Validation Workshop** (scheduled for October 12–14, 2020) and the Official Relaunch Ceremony (October 14, 2020). Activities included developing the workshop concept note and agenda as well as workshop materials.
-
- ICCC approval letter from GHS*
- Mali Multi-sector Platform:** During the reporting period, Act | West supported revision of the draft TOR for the multisector platform. In September 2020, in coordination with HKI and the PNLMTN, World Vision finalized preparation of workshop materials for the Roadmap Development Workshop scheduled for September 30–October 2, 2020. However, due to the temporary suspension of program activities in Mali because of security concerns, the workshop was postponed.
 - Niger Multi-sector Platform:** In April 2020, Act | West provided technical support to the NTDP to develop an initial draft TOR for the multisector platform in Niger. The World Vision and HKI team organized a review meeting with the NTDP for the TOR draft before engaging with other stakeholders. In August 2020, Act | West supported the NTDP to plan and implement the workshop to develop a roadmap for multi-sector coordination for NTDs, which was held September 1–3, 2020. Twenty-three stakeholders attended the workshop from across sectors.
 - Senegal Multi-sector Platform:** In April 2020, Act | West supported the NTDP to refine the draft TOR for the six commissions of the multi-sector platform. Following several rounds of reviews in May 2020, the TOR was introduced to the MSAS leadership for review and validation. In August 2020, the MSAS Legislative Committee reviewed the ministerial decree document and provided inputs to the cabinet. The DLM incorporated the feedback and submitted the document to the cabinet of the Minister for final review and signature.

Sierra Leone Partners Network Forum (PNF): In May 2020, Act | West supported the NTDP to develop an initial draft TOR of the PNF. In June, Act | West provided technical support to the NTDP to host a virtual meeting with key stakeholders for further technical review before submission to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. Stakeholders included the Ministry of Water Resources, Environmental Health Directorate, Adolescence and School Health Program, World Vision, HKI, Sightsavers, and WaterAid–Sierra Leone. As of September 2020, the NTDP has submitted the PNF TOR to the top-level management in the MOHS for endorsement by the Minister of Health and Sanitation and the Chief Medical Officer.

Activity 2.16: Integrate NTD Prevention Messages as Part of Ongoing SBCC Interventions: Pilot WASH UP! and NTD Materials in Ghana and Niger (IR3)

During the previous reporting period, Training of trainers' workshops were held in **Niger and Ghana** to train teachers, heads of school, and education officials on the NTD-WASH UP! curriculum and new NTD learning materials. Pilot implementation and formative research of the NTD-WASH UP! program was also conducted in Niger. During this reporting period, the COVID-19 context and closure of schools prevented pilot implementation of the NTD-WASH UP! curriculum in Ghana as well as the post-mortem meeting in Niger. World Vision has proposed schools for pilot implementation in Ghana when they re-open in FY21. World Vision tentatively plans to organize the Niger post-mortem meeting in November and scale up implementation at the beginning of CY 2021.

- **Ghana:** In May 2020, World Vision proposed schools for pilot implementation of the NTD-WASH UP! curriculum, based on NTD endemicity and prevalence. In July 2020, World Vision engaged Ghana Education Service's School Health Education Program (SHEP) in the selection of schools for the pilot. In August 2020, World Vision held a meeting with the WASH Focal Point for SHEP to review and select schools. Selection criteria include SCH endemicity and availability of school WASH infrastructure. SHEP will identify schools which UNICEF had equipped with WASH infrastructure. SHEP also proposed building capacity of teachers and students in soap-making, re-visiting student-led Tippy-Tap construction, and providing Veronica buckets outside classrooms to promote COVID-19 prevention practices among students. World Vision will draft an introductory letter on WASH UP! for review by SHEP and onward submission to the Regional Directors of Education for the selection of schools.
- **Niger:** World Vision and Sesame conducted formative research with four schools in the Maradi region of Niger. The research aimed at testing appeal of WASH UP! NTD content among students and WASH UP! facilitators; test comprehension of educational content related to bilharzia and hookworms; assess quality of implementation and training of WASH UP! NTD content; and provide recommendations for content revision and training adaptations to increase students' engagement and comprehension around WASH UP! NTD messaging. The research team tested two sessions. Session 3 is about "Staying Healthy from Illness" and Session 6 is about "Wearing Sandals." The team tested story mat games connected to the two sessions ("Shoo Away Bilharzia!" and "The Hookworm Chase"), the "Visiting a Friend" video, and the "Bilharzia and Intestinal Worms' Storybook." In addition, the research team interviewed the WASH UP! facilitator to collect data on training content and implementation.

The findings indicate that children's favorite activities were the storybook (45%), the video (40%), and the story mat games (15%). Children's limited preference for story mat games is likely related to implementation issues and a more static format. Recommendations included providing additional details about NTDs in the training manual to help less experienced teachers; including details about how NTDs are transmitted, the symptoms, and treatment; and improving Hausa translations and providing more training on reading in Hausa. These recommendations and findings will be discussed and addressed during the post-mortem meeting, which was postponed until the next school year. (Students and teachers went on holiday starting July 15, 2020.) In September 2020, due to floods and subsequent classroom occupation by displaced populations, the Government of Niger decided to postpone the opening of schools until October 15, 2020. The meeting will be held in collaboration with the Maradi Niger-WASH team and Chadakori and Guidan Sori Education Inspectors.

Activity 2.17: Review and Analysis of Existing Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Materials and Messages Across Multiple Sectors for Integration of PC-NTD Content (IR3)

No activities were planned in FY20.

Event/ Participation During the reporting period, Act | West consortium members participated in international conferences, webinars, and technical meetings. Below are highlights.

WHO webinar and international conferences

- On September 2, the Act | West Communications Team facilitated contact with WHO to highlight Act | West work in Niger during the **WHO WASH NTDs webinar**, “How can WASH help reach 2030 Roadmap targets?” The objective of the panel was to address progress and achievements of WASH and NTDs collaboration, coordination, and integration at the country level—including policy engagement and program delivery. Zeinabou Mahamane, the Act | West Cross Sector Advisor in Niger (World Vision team), was invited as a panelist and presented the integrated, school-based NTD–WASH UP! approach in Niger.
- On September 10, Deloitte facilitated an engaging symposium, “Considerations for developing and deploying cost and economic impact models in the elimination/control of 5 PCT NTDs” during the **NNN 2020 Conference**. The chair of the panel, Courtney Johnson (Deloitte) opened the event by providing a brief overview and introducing the speakers. The first presenter, AnnaMaria Shaker (Deloitte), provided a conceptual overview of the model, discussed the needs that the model addresses, and provided context on how the model fits into Act | West’s sustainability approach. The second presenter, Walter Ochieng (CDC), provided a more technical overview of the model and its guiding principles, using screenshots of the beta version to explain how it is structured—including the current user interface, the backend calculations, and the underlying assumptions. Lastly, Mary Hodges (Helen Keller–Sierra Leone) spoke about how this model, once completed, will be tested and used in Sierra Leone by the NTDP for budget advocacy, by demonstrating the economic and social costs of LF morbidities. Justin Tine (FHI 360) provided additional context on the Act | West sustainability approach, which was followed by a very engaged discussion with over 60 participants and questions shared via virtual chat. The recording of the full presentation is available on the NNN YouTube channel at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nT_4wKy_K50&feature=youtu.be
- Also during the **NNN Conference**, September 8–10, World Vision–US Technical Advisor Arielle Dolegui presented during the Rapid Fire Session 1 on “Cross-country approaches for service delivery integration with education and health for sustainable NTD programming,” sharing examples from Ghana, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

Technical meetings

- **June 24 and July 1, 2020:** The Act | West team (FHI 360, World Vision, Deloitte) attended meetings on IR2/3 indicators with USAID and Act | East. The objectives were to discuss high-level IR2/3 indicators, what needs refinement, and what should be added or removed. The list of high-level indicators provided a broad view of USAID’s direction regarding the sustainability outcomes. These discussions were helpful for prioritizing IR2 activities for FY21.
- **July 8, 2020:** World Vision, FHI 360, and ASCEND technical teams held a WASH Exchange session to discuss ongoing WASH initiatives underway in their respective countries. Act | West highlighted the ongoing NTD-WASH UP! pilot in Niger and Ghana as well as the cross-sector landscape and barrier analyses. Also, Act | West highlighted in-country coordination with ASCEND partners—Sightsavers

and WaterAid in Ghana and Sierra Leone. Both partners actively participated in the Roadmap Workshop to establish the ICCC in Ghana and the PNF in Sierra Leone. ASCEND West and Central Africa programs highlighted that their WASH activities are in relatively early stages; ASCEND is mainly conducting an assessment to define its approach to WASH coordination. An ongoing monthly check-in meeting was agreed to as a next step. These exchange sessions will improve coordination and share respective experiences and plans for WASH coordination.

Challenges

Due to country responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, key activities slated for Q2–Q4 could not be implemented as scheduled. Act | West has created contingency plans to provide remote support where possible. Despite the contingency plans and the development of new models to provide TA, a series of planned FY20 activities could not be completed in FY20. Annex 3 provides a full list of FY20 planned activities that will not be carried over into FY21, either due to a change in approach resulting from COVID-19-related TA provision, a change in country needs/priorities, or plans to achieve objectives through a different activity in FY21.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING—PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES

The Act | West Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Team aims to improve NTD programming by providing high quality NTD data as a basis for evidence-based decision making and as a basis of accountability for USAID's investment in NTDs. The key aims of M&E are to foster learning and accountability throughout the program cycle. M&E is an integral part of program development, implementation, and success. Act | West's MEL approach employs existing tools and structures, where possible, and supports countries to build M&E capacity and integrate M&E for NTDs more broadly in the activities and platforms of the relevant MOHs.

MEL Activities Involving Direct Support to Countries

In the second half of FY20, the MEL team offered short-term TA (STTA) using a range of data quality improvement tools. However, STTA took place on a very limited basis owing to the temporary suspension of many activities due to COVID-19. Activities are described in more detail below.

Promoting Use of WHO'S Supervisor Coverage Tool (SCT) to Improve Coverage During MDAs

The Supervisor Coverage Tool (SCT) was used in Q1 of FY20 in Sierra Leone in the four LF hotspot districts of Kenema, Koinadugu, Bombali, and Kailahun undergoing MDA. However, use of SCT did not happen in the last half FY20 because MDAs were halted due to COVID-19. For FY20 planned activities, SCH MDA is due to begin on October 12, 2020, and the OV/STH MDA on November 23, 2020; SCT will be used during those MDAs. Guinea planned to use the SCT in late March in four HDs. The HKI M&E Advisor based in Dakar (Benoit Dembele) provided remote training to the Guinea team in March 2020. However, the MDA did not take place until August 2020 after activities restarted when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. The SCT was not used during the MDA as originally planned due to redirected focus on COVID-19 protocol measures and related logistics during the MDA. Additionally, in Niger, SCT was used in the trachoma MDA that started in September 2020, but HQ MEL was not involved in providing technical support as originally planned; the results of the MDA and the SCT will be shared by the country shortly. Although there were plans to use SCT in Benin for LF and trachoma MDAs in the second half of FY20, the MDAs did not happen.

Assisting with Coverage Evaluation Surveys (CES) to Evaluate Coverage after MDAs

In FY20, USAID requested that implementation of CES be limited to cases where it can inform an upcoming MDA. USAID also advised to avoid conducting CES where the final MDA prior to a pre-TAS, pre-re-TAS or TIS has already taken place. Therefore, in the last two quarters of FY20, only **Burkina Faso** conducted a CES (in Kampti HD in March 2020). Act | West regional MEL staff supported protocol review, training prior to fieldwork, and supervision of the CES to ensure adherence to the protocol. For the second half of FY20, CES were planned in **Benin** (but cancelled), **Ghana** (postponed), and **Guinea** (the associated MDA only happened in August).

Training on and Assisting with Data Quality Assessment (DQA) on MDA Indicators as a Means of Diagnosing and Correcting Issues with Systemic Data Quality and Flow

In the second half of FY20, DQAs were planned in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, but none of them took place due to COVID-19-related restrictions. In **Burkina Faso**, LF MDAs in five HDs for the Sud-Ouest and Centre-Est regions have been delayed but will start on November 10; the associated DQA will start December 8. In **Ghana**, all LF MDAs have been delayed but will take place in FY21,

followed by the associated DQA. **Senegal** and **Sierra Leone** planning a DQA in relation to OV/SCH MDA and OV/SCH MDA, respectively. However, neither took place due to COVID-19 related restrictions. The SCH MDA was re-scheduled for October 12, 2020, and the OV/STH MDA for November 23, 2020—with the DQA planned afterwards. In each instance, Act | West regional MEL staff will actively participate in the DQA training as well as the actual implementation of the DQA (travel permitting) to ensure WHO guidelines are adhered to and the assessment provides an accurate snapshot of the systems' data flow—with strengths and weaknesses highlighted. In all four countries where DQAs are still to take place, the MEL team will follow up after the DQA to ensure that remedial measures or recommendations that came out of the DQA were integrated into future MDA rounds.

Promoting the Use of Electronic Data Collection (EDC) for DSAs

Act | West has been investigating a number of EDC platforms for suitability during DSAs for four of the five NTD diseases (as well as for CES and other non-DSA surveys).¹ ESPEN Collect, developed and managed by ESPEN for AFRO region countries, offers such a platform. In FY20, the MEL team commenced a “pilot” of ESPEN Collect in a few countries (since it has not been used extensively by Act | West countries) to determine if it can meet the program requirements to support EDC for surveys. Several HKI countries have used the ONA platform for EDC surveys during DSAs for different diseases, and the experiences will be documented and compared to those with ESPEN Collect.

Evaluation of the ESPEN Collect pilots will be based on the ability of ESPEN to provide appropriate data security systems and data sharing agreements, as well as the ability to provide quality services such as:

- Monitoring of real-time daily remote data upload, remote troubleshooting of data errors and uploads, and basic data cleaning support relating to duplicates and/or omission of records
- Secure and continuous access to real-time data, dashboards, and summary results made available to MOHs and ministry-approved partners

Beyond these essential components, the Act | West MEL team is determining if ESPEN is able to adapt to different survey and country contexts, respond to a surge in demand for services, and strengthen country capacity and ministry ownership for all stages of the survey process. In the pilot countries it is essential that Act | West have access to the resulting USAID-supported DSA datasets, to facilitate analyzing results. After piloting ESPEN Collect in a few countries, a brief document will be drafted outlining the pros and cons of both ESPEN Collect and ONA, with a clear set of recommendations on the circumstances under which each platform is most appropriate. This document will be produced in FY21 when the first round of ESPEN Collect pilots are complete.

In March 2020, **Côte d'Ivoire** engaged the services of ESPEN Collect for its first ever pre-TAS in 46 HDs. The MEL HQ team (Diana Stukel, Egide Ndayishimye, and Brian Fuller) arranged for an introduction of ESPEN to the **Côte d'Ivoire** Country Office and the MOH. The Act | West Implementation Management Lead (Kisito Ogooussan) provided EDC training for the pre-TAS just prior to field work in March 2020, but implementation was postponed at the last minute due to the COVID-19 crisis. The pre-TAS took place August 25–September 14, 2020, and data collection was successfully completed using ESPEN Collect. Throughout data collection, the Act | West HQ MEL team assisted by monitoring the ESPEN dashboard

¹ Note that all surveys for trachoma are conducted using EDC with support from Tropical Data and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

to look for errors and issues and to take note of the quality of assistance provided by the ESPEN team in Brazzaville. In FY20, ESPEN Collect was also engaged for EDC support for the pre-TAS in **Senegal** that started September 17, 2020, in 14 HDs. In **Benin**, ESPEN Collect was engaged for EDC support for the pre-re-TAS that started September 24, 2020, in 4 HDs (now complete) and a TAS2 that commenced on October 12, 2020, in 9 HDs (still ongoing). For both countries, the HQ MEL team assisted in brokering the relationship between the CO and ESPEN, and MEL monitored the ESPEN dashboards throughout data collection. Finally, in FY19, **Burkina Faso** used ESPEN Collect for pre-TAS surveys and in March 2020 for a CES. Burkina Faso also intended to use ESPEN Collect for a pre-TAS and TAS1/2 using Android devices in FY20, but the DSAs were delayed due to COVID-19. Activities have restarted and pre-TAS is now planned to commence October 8, 2020, using ESPEN Collect.

As mentioned earlier, most HKI countries are more familiar with ONA than ESPEN Collect and tend towards using that platform. **Niger** is preparing to conduct FY20 pre-TAS and TAS2 using ONA; these carry-over surveys will be conducted in October 2020, but preparations were started in Q4 of FY20. The experience with ONA will be tracked and ultimately compared with that of ESPEN Collect in the pilot countries (with results included in the previously mentioned report).

Some countries use their own internally developed systems in support of EDC for DSAs. For instance, in **Ghana**, an EDC tool called Lymph App was used during the pre-TAS in the second half of FY20 that took place in five EUs in two regions of Ghana. The Ghana FHI 360 M&E officer for Act | West supported the training of field personnel who used the app. This app made data collection, management, and analysis easy as data on pre-TAS was immediately available after the last day work.

Finally, after resumption of many NTD activities, Act | West collaborated with Act | East to develop Supervisor's Checklists for COVID-19 protocols, to be used during DSAs and MDAs, respectively. These were vetted and approved by USAID. HKI developed an ODK (EDC) version of the Supervisor's Checklist for DSAs. Act | West HQ MEL worked with ESPEN Collect to see if this could be added onto the usual ESPEN Collect platform. ESPEN agreed, and the related checklist data were collected in electronic form in both Senegal and Benin for the aforementioned pre-TAS, pre-re-TAS, and TAS2. HKI also developed EDC versions of the Supervisor's Checklist for Burkina Faso's FY20 planned pre-TAS, TAS1, and TAS2 (surveys that started October 8, 2020) and for Cameroon's FY20 planned TAS2 (that started October 7, 2020).

Ensuring that Countries Have Secure and Up-to-date NTD Data in a Country-owned and Managed Integrated NTD Database (CIND) to Permit Sound, Data-driven NTDP Decision Making

WHO promotes a user-driven Microsoft Access-based software that permits countries to create a basic structure for a country-owned and managed integrated NTD database (called the Country Integrated NTD Database, or CIND). The aim is that countries should independently create, populate, and maintain such a database and use it as a source of data-driven decision making for their NTDPs—as the main source of information for reports to external stakeholders and internal reports to the MOH, as well as for submission of drug applications via automatic uploading of CIND information into the WHO Joint Application Program (JAP) system.

Act | West's approach to ensure a secure and up-to-date NTD database in supported countries is focused on three elements: 1) ensuring the existence and use of a stable platform for NTD data storage and management (CIND or an equivalent); 2) ensuring that the database is up-to-date and includes all current and historical data for all relevant NTD diseases; and 3) ensuring that the data is secure, access is password-protected, and data are regularly backed up.

In April 2020 (and before that in July 2019), the Act | West MEL team conducted information gathering in all 11 countries on CIND usage, the status of historical data entry, and practices regarding storage and safeguarding data. A questionnaire was emailed to each country and the responses helped to inform Act | West's strategy for providing technical support in the three areas mentioned above. The strategy was mapped out in the FY21 HQ work plan and will be implemented in FY21. Support provided during the reporting period is described below.

Benin: The country has been trained on and actively uses a CIND. In the second half of FY20, PNLMT staff updated the NTD database with data for the FY20 OV MDA and the FY20 LF MDA. FHI 360 created a backup for the data on an external drive.

Côte d'Ivoire: The country actively uses a CIND and regularly integrates new data. Following the October 2020 MDAs, a workshop is planned on MDA data entry at the health district level (for 74 HDs) and data will be exported from district level to central level.

Ghana: The CIND has been set up at the NTDP and is actively maintained by the M&E Officer. Act | West conducted an orientation for all NTDP desk officers early in FY20. However, planned training during the reporting period of Regional NTD Focal Points and Regional Health Information Officers on the CIND could not take place. Historical data up to FY17 has been entered in the CIND; the process of entering historical data beyond FY17 has begun. The NTDP recently created a backup of the data.

Niger: The CIND is used for LF and OV, but Excel files are used for trachoma and for SCH/ STH. HKI procured a hard drive and data was backed up in September 2020. In FY21, the NTDP will be encouraged to develop a systematic timetable for regular and frequent backups; currently there is no agreed-upon schedule. Several hard drives will also be replaced in FY21, as some are older.

Senegal: The country has been using the CIND for many years and the database is quite up to date. Demography data were entered during the reporting period; entry of FY20 MDA data is ongoing.

Sierra Leone: The country did not have a formal database until recently. The second of two installation sessions was held in Q4 of FY20, with TA provided by MEL HQ. Software was successfully installed on a dedicated computer for the NTDP. The NTDP will decide on finalizing database implementation options in early FY21. Act | West MEL HQ will continue to provide TA until the country's data are organized and backed up in FY21.

Conducting a MEL Coordination and Collaboration Workshop

This workshop was planned to take place in Accra, Ghana, in September 2020 but has been postponed until FY21.

MEL Cross-cutting Activities

In addition to providing direct assistance to the Act | West countries, the MEL team has worked on a number of cross-cutting activities to strengthen and promote improved data quality, access, analysis, and use and that benefit the program directly—as well as all stakeholders within the NTD ecosystem. Pertinent activities in the second half of FY20 are described below.

Cooperating with TFGH / PHII as Part of the USAID NTD Database and Data System Transition Task Force

The USAID NTD Database and Data System Transition Task Force (hereafter, Task Force) was formed in FY19 to support development of a future USAID NTD database. A partnership between the Taskforce on

Global Health (TFGH) and the Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII) has been working in close collaboration with the Task Force members, including FHI 360 (Act | West), RTI (Act | East), and USAID.

In March 2020, PHII began conducting a six-month software/vendor analysis to determine the best system, using either DHIS2 or a custom software solution, and to identify a developer to build the new database. However, it was determined that additional technical development should be paused. During this reporting period, Act | West MEL reconciled historical LF survey data stored in the M&E Cube with the current LF survey tracker, to facilitate future migration of historical data into the new database.

The MEL Director (Diana Stukel), and FHI 360 MEL Data Analyst/ MEL Lead (Maureen Headland) assisted with the software/vendor analysis by completing the following:

- Writing a database summary document
- Reviewing the vendor letter, vendor questionnaire, and evaluation matrix to ensure they accurately captured the requirements for the new system
- Reviewing the total cost of ownership matrix and the vendor scoring methodology
- Developing a “top five list” outlining core requirements of the new system
- Participating in three vendor demonstrations (July 23, 24, and 27) and a debrief session with USAID on July 29 to arrive at a final choice for a contractor.

Ultimately, it was decided that the new database would use DHIS2 as its software platform (database warehouse). BAO Systems was chosen as the contractor to operationalize the DHIS2 platform as the basis for setting up a new USAID NTD database.

On Sept 10, 2020, the FHI 360 HQ MEL team took a full day course from BAO Systems on Tracker and Event Analytics. The HKI HQ MEL will take the same course in October 2020. All HQ MEL staff are taking an 18-hour, online, self-directed course on the basics of DHIS2.

Continuing Strengthening Existing USAID NTD Data Input and Data Output Products in Support of Both Reporting to USAID and Decision Making for Program Implementation

During this transition year, while TFGH/ PHII was developing a future USAID NTD database and a set of associated tools, Act | West continued to maintain the existing tools for reporting to USAID and making decisions for program implementation—understanding that in subsequent years, the database and tools are likely to be replaced in the new systems developed by TFGH/ PHII and BAO Systems. Below are some of the tools that have been maintained during the second half of FY20.

Disease and Program Workbooks

The Act | West MEL team continued to support data collection and review of program data quality through the Excel-based disease and program workbooks. These workbooks serve as the essential data input source for the USAID NTD database and are the drivers of many NTD data output products. The MEL team has been working closely with the countries and program partners to obtain, review, and finalize the disease and program workbooks from FY20 (interim workbooks) for all 11 Act | West countries. Similarly, FY21 disease and program workbooks were generated in support of FY21 work planning for all 11 countries and were submitted as part of the overall package from each country. Disease and program workbooks for current and past years have been redistricted as necessary, to align

with national changes in administrative geography. The MEL team has collaborated with Standard Code to ensure that inactive regions (arising as a result of redistricting) have been removed.

LF and trachoma (and OV) survey trackers

The Act | West Disease Focal Points, in coordination with the MEL team, have worked to update the LF TAS Tracker (which includes the pre-TAS Tracker) and Trachoma Survey Tracker and submit them on a monthly basis to USAID.

The MEL Data Analyst/ MEL Lead and the HKI-seconded M&E Associate also reconciled historical pre-TAS data with the newly developed pre-TAS Tracker, to provide the full pre-TAS history to USAID and to facilitate future integration into the new database. The pre-TAS data were included as part of the June submission to USAID of the TAS Tracker (now called the pre-TAS/TAS Tracker).

Finally, given that no equivalent OV survey tracker exists, the Act | West MEL collaborated with Act | East to begin developing a tracker to collect data on OV surveys planned and conducted in FY20. This will serve as an intermediary solution as Act | West transitions from the program workbook to the new database. This work will continue in FY21.

BELF and BETR

The Blueprint for Elimination for LF (BELF) and the Blueprint for Elimination for Trachoma (BETR) are two data output products that provide retrospective and prospective information (from roughly 2007–2030), by district and for the whole country, on the yearly status (e.g., MDA, stop-MDA, surveillance) for each disease. These tools offer critical projections that permit forward planning based on current and historical information. RTI created the BELF and the BETR under the ENVISION project and updated them twice annually. However, under ENVISION, BELFs and BETRs only existed for the five transition countries (Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal) that are currently under Act | West’s remit; none existed for the End in Africa countries.

In FY20, considering delays in development of the new database, Act | West decided it was more sustainable to build and maintain these BELF and BETR tools in-house without the assistance of Act | East. This included building BELFs and BETRs from scratch for former End in Africa countries where LF and trachoma are still endemic, but the tools did not exist.

In May 2020, as an interim measure only, Act | West MEL created versions of these outputs manually to facilitate planning of LF and trachoma MDAs and surveys in the FY21 work planning process. The HKI-seconded Program Associate manually updated the HKI adaptations of the BELF and BETRs. The M&E Technical Advisor based in Ghana updated existing HKI adaptations of the BELFs and BETRs and developed portions of these tools for Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana (which did not have BELF/BETRs previously) and updated ENVISION versions of the BELF and BETR for Benin and Senegal. HQ MEL sent these interim projection tools to countries prior to work planning to enable country offices to reference them when planning activities.

In Q3–Q4 of FY20, the FHI 360 MEL Data Analyst and Manager (Kaustubh Wagh) and MEL Data Analyst/ MEL Lead (Maureen Headland) started developing more permanent solutions. They wrote SAS programs to build an internal “BETR database” using the master dataset and Trachoma Survey Tracker as the two primary inputs for all Act | West countries—making the BETR purely an output tool. Excel templates with two different views of BETR data (one that mimics the ENVISION adaptation and one that mimics the HKI adaptation) and the SAS programs to populate these outputs were also developed and are

undergoing internal testing. This code will be recycled and edited to produce a “BELF database” and a version of the BELF early in FY21.

MEL products in support of country and HQ Work planning (country and HQ work planning tables) and SAR2 (Appendix Tables)

During this transition year (developing the new NTD database while the existing systems are still in place), the Act | West MEL team and the Act | East MEL team have worked through a coordinated schedule of workbook reviews and uploads, including MANDE error checking runs, to facilitate production of some of the data output products for reporting to USAID for FY21 work planning and for SAR2.

In support of FY21 work planning (submitted August 2020):

- Act | West MEL team produced more than 140 HQ and country-specific tables, 70 country-specific maps, and 22 new disease and program workbooks as part of the 11 country and HQ work plan submissions. The MEL team performed QA checks to ensure that the work plan narratives, tables, maps, and associated workbooks contained consistent and coherent data and indicators.
- The MEL Director and select members of the MEL team participated in a series of USAID “check-in” meetings in June 2020 prior to drafting FY21 country work plans, to discuss proposed activities to be included.
- The MEL Director conducted a two-hour internal stakeholder meeting on August 5 to vet elements of the MEL (including Learning) and Gender components of the HQ work plan with partners and country offices.
- The MEL Director finalized the MEL component of the HQ work plan for FY21, submitted to USAID on August 31.

In support of SAR2 (to be submitted November 2020):

- The Act | West MEL team produced a scaled-back submission (at USAID’s request) limited to a Performance Plan and Report (PPR) table (including information on FY20 targeted and actual MDA treatments, as well as information on FY20 trainings planned and conducted) and a table on DSAs planned and conducted in FY20.

USAID LF and Trachoma Dossier Trackers

The USAID LF and Trachoma Dossier Trackers are data input tools that collect and organize essential historical information (on mapping, MDA, DSAs, and Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention [MMDP]) that countries must submit to WHO when applying for elimination status. The trackers also contain information on dossier preparation, submission and review (where countries are in terms of the dossier submission process). The trackers permit USAID and Act | West to keep track of each country’s progress as it approaches dossier submission—to establish dossier readiness and to identify gaps in information or inaccurate information. In FY20, the MEL Data Analyst/ MEL Lead, the MEL Data Analyst and Manager, and MEL Focal Points updated the LF and Trachoma USAID Dossier Trackers with data from the USAID NTD database. The Act | West Disease Focal Points added additional data related to morbidity and elimination projections and activities. The LF and Trachoma Dossier Trackers, an annual deliverable to USAID, were submitted in June.

COVID-19 impact on MDAs and DSAs template

In March 2020, a temporary suspension of all NTD activities was instituted in all 11 Act | West countries due to COVID-19. USAID asked for information on the impact of COVID-19-related delays on USAID-funded activities by providing a summary of the number of targeted districts and people where MDAs and DSAs were planned from January through August 2020. The template for delivering the requested information was negotiated and agreed upon with USAID and Act | East. Act | West populated the template and delivered it to USAID the first week of June 2020. The populated template was a rich source of information by country that allowed USAID to project the impact of delayed, postponed, or cancelled NTD MDAs and DSAs. Developing and Refining Indicators to Track and Monitor IR2/ IR3 Activities

In June and July 2020, the Act | West MEL team worked with USAID, the Act | West HSS team, Deloitte, World Vision, and the Act | East MEL and HSS teams to further develop and refine high-level draft IR2/IR3 indicators to correspond to the six high-level outcomes (relating to governance, policies, resources, indicators, services, and funding). The process was informed by a white paper drafted by USAID and both NTD programs; it outlined the framework and strategy to promote sustainability and defined the six strategic high-level outcomes to be achieved. The indicators will be further refined in FY21, through a series of working sessions with the above stakeholders (including the Act | West MEL team). This will be followed by development of a set of feasible and measurable lower level indicators, informed by the landscape analysis that has been undertaken by Act | West HSS and partners. Once the entire set of indicators is finalized, the MEL team will develop an associated set of Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) for each indicator—offering clear definitions of the indicators, specific instructions on how they should be computed, and mechanisms and sources through which the data underlying the indicators can be collected. Harnessing GIS as a Means of Data Visualization and Interpretation

During the reporting period, FHI 360's in-house GIS team continued to offer map making support to the Act | West program. Activities included the following.

- Standard, static maps for inclusion in each of the 11 country-specific work plans were produced in August 2020. The maps provided information on endemicity status, MDA geographic coverage, and progress towards elimination for all five diseases. The maps were quality checked by the MEL team and Act | West Disease Focal Points and submitted as part of the country work plans.
- The in-house FHI 360 GIS team produced a series of “cross-border coordination” maps for groups of countries in the portfolio with LF and OV endemic districts along shared borders to facilitate future cross-border coordination meetings and enable bilateral discussions on coordinated MDAs. The GIS team also produced a set of maps for relevant countries showing LF and trachoma hotspots (as defined by pre-TAS and TAS1 failures for LF, and by TIS and TSS failures for trachoma). Both sets of maps were provided to countries to assist with work planning. These also serve as an invaluable internal resource and provide Act | West MEL staff and Disease Focal Points an “at a glance” visual understanding of the complex situation in each country.
- A five-day training of Act | West M&E program country staff and MOH M&E Officers on ArcGIS was initially planned for July 2020 in Accra, Ghana, but was postponed to FY21 due to COVID-19 restrictions on international travel.

Recruitment

Given the departure of the MEL Epidemiologist and Learning Lead (Dr. Rachel Bronzan) in February 2020, recruitment to refill the position was launched in the second half of FY20; an offer has been made to a candidate who, pending acceptance, will start with Act | West in November 2020.

Defining and Implementing a Learning Agenda for Act | West

The Learning Agenda for Act | West, led by the Act | West MEL Epidemiologist and Learning Lead (Rachel Bronzan) up until Q2 of FY20, aimed to accomplish the following priority activities in FY20:

- Establish and operationalize a Learning Agenda Task Force and a framework and process to advance learning activities
- Implement the four specific learning activities planned for FY20
 - Investigate factors that led to TSS with TF \geq 5% in Niger and Cameroon (led by the Trachoma Focal Point, Stephanie Palmer)
 - Develop guidance on post-validation surveillance for trachoma (led by the Trachoma Focal Point, Stephanie Palmer)
 - Develop a systematic approach for review and analysis of OV data in light of the latest WHO guidelines, to bridge the data gap between OV programs and OV expert committees (led by the QI/QA Implementation Lead, Kisito Ogooussan)
 - Map and strengthen USAID and national NTD data systems (led by the MEL Data Analyst/MEL Lead, Maureen Headland)

Because the Learning Agenda activities were not approved by USAID until late in the first quarter of FY20 (and due to the departure from FHI 360 of Rachel Bronzan in February 2020), no progress was made in establishing a Learning Agenda Task Force. However, some limited progress was made on the four specific Learning Agenda activities planned for FY20, as described below.

- *Investigate factors that led to TSS with TF \geq 5% in Niger and Cameroon:* A working group comprising Act | West MEL staff (including MEL staff from both FHI 360 and HKI), HKI program staff, and the Trachoma Focal Point met regularly to discuss a proposed way forward. The group began by having brief discussions with the National Coordinators from both countries to determine whether they would be interested in participating. Following positive responses, the working group began reviewing the ENVISION-created job aid, “Response to Failure” checklist, which is part of the “Trachoma DSA Checklist Set.” The group determined that this checklist was a good starting point and contained the majority of thematic areas and questions required for an investigation into TIS and TSS “failures.” However, they felt a more extensive Excel-based tool to gather all data in one place would better facilitate transparency in terms of specific information pulled together and would facilitate a conversation on next steps. The tool was developed by Act | West staff, reviewed by the Senior NTD Technical Advisor for Trachoma at USAID, and is currently being reviewed by the Cameroon Trachoma Program with a view to piloting it in that country. Feedback from the Cameroon National Program will be incorporated into the tool, followed by feedback from the Niger National Program, prior to finalizing it.
- *Inform the development of guidance on post-validation surveillance for trachoma:* This has not yet begun and has been reprogrammed for FY21. The proposed activity includes: 1) a literature review

of national post-validation surveillance (PVS) plans in countries that have been validated as having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem; an at-a-glance reference created to summarize activities; 2) a web-based survey among National Trachoma Program Managers to assess perceptions around needs, plans under development, opportunities and barriers to development, and plans for financing; and 3) a mixed methods documentation of Ghana's PVS plan to understand the plan and its implementation.

- *OV in the context of a systematic approach for the review and analysis of data in light of WHO guidelines:* Act | West developed two complementary components. The first was an OV data template—an input document to capture data source, information, and recommendations from technical meetings—to create a record of all the OV documents since the inception of the program, including the Onchocerciasis Control Project (OCP)- and the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC)-era documents. The second component of the OV tracker is an output spreadsheet that provides a structural layout of OV information with specific details and granular data by transmission zone, focus, district, and village—including entomological, epidemiological, parasitological, serological, vector molecular, drug treatment, and transmission status information. These two components will be tested during FY21 in Senegal and Togo to allow country-specific input to improve the templates for use by the entire Act | West portfolio.
- *Map and strengthen USAID and national NTD data systems:* Act | West chose Ghana as the first country to pilot this activity. Their NTD program and NTD data systems are mature, and the presence and expertise of FHI 360 staff based in the Accra office, including the HQ M&E Technical Advisor and the Ghana M&E Officer (who also has experience working in the GHS), were factors in choosing this country. During the reporting period, a preliminary flowchart was built in Lucidchart to map the flow of NTD data across the national NTD data system. Note that in FY21, this activity will be redirected and refocused towards building a complementary tool to the DQA, at the request of USAID and as described in the FY21 work plan.

COMMUNICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT—PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES

Act | West recognizes the importance of keeping the broader NTD and global health community informed about the program's and countries' progress toward eliminating and controlling NTDs. The Act | West program team carefully documents and shares information regularly through multiple channels; supports the USAID NTD Communications Team, national MOH, and NTDP communication and knowledge management (KM) activities and partner communication and KM efforts. The program also actively cultivates partnerships with the NTD and related communities. During the reporting period, the team:

- Informed countries, partners, donors, and colleagues in the NTD community about the program's progress and impact to date
- Created or contributed to dialogue among the NTD community on shared challenges, issues, and concerns
- Showcased cost efficiencies and improved equity in healthcare and the public health impact of NTD control efforts and advocated for the expansion of partnerships and funding for such efforts
- Multiplied the program's impact by informing NTD control efforts in non-Act | West countries that are still struggling to control NTD transmission
- Improved awareness about NTDs among global health professionals and the general public

Activity 1: Documentation and Dissemination of Program Activities, Results and Impact

Program successes, best practices, lessons learned

The team provided editorial and formatting support for session proposal and abstract submissions to NNN, COR-NTD, and ASTMH during the reporting period. They also collaborated with the NTD-SC to submit a set of photos to the COR-NTD Secretariat for use in the 2020 COR-NTD conference photo gallery. The team worked with FHI 360 Corporate Communications to promote Act | West's participation in the NNN, ASTMH, and COR-NTD conferences on FHI 360's corporate social media channels. In September, FHI 360 Corporate Communications amplified Act | West social media posts on corporate channels.

Success stories, blogs, content for Act | West website: The Communications Team worked with technical staff, partners, and country office staff in the period under review to develop several success stories, which were either published or will be published on the Act | West website as feature articles or blog posts. These include:

- [Mapping morbidity moves Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire toward NTD elimination](#)
- [Benin's Campaign Like No Other: Mass Treatment for Neglected Tropical Diseases during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- Guinea's neglected tropical diseases program treats 4.4 million people in 14 days, despite COVID-19 (publication expected in October 2020)

During the period under review, WHO published multiple iterations of interim guidelines for NTD activities and programs in the context of COVID-19. The Communications Team supported the dissemination and communication of these guidelines in Act | West countries by facilitating the translation of key sections of the guidance into French and posting three articles on in both French and English on the Act | West website. Links are provided below.

- [World Health Organization issues interim guidance for implementation of NTD programs](#)
- [L'OMS Publie des Orientations Provisoires Pour la Mise en œuvre des Programmes des MTN](#)
- [WHO publishes updated interim guidance on community-based health care in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [L'Organisation mondiale de la santé \(OMS\) a publié une mise à jour des orientations provisoires sur les soins de santé à base communautaire, y compris les campagnes de sensibilisation et les campagnes dans le contexte de la pandémie de COVID-19](#)
- [WHO outlines considerations for implementing mass treatment, active case-finding and population-based surveys for neglected tropical diseases in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [L'OMS presente les considérations relatives à la mise en œuvre de traitement de masse, de recherche active de cas et d'enquêtes communautaire pour les maladies tropicales négligées dans le contexte de la pandémie de COVID-19](#)

Act | West Quarterly Roundup Newsletter: Due to the issuing of WHO guidance for NTD programs in the COVID-19 context, the Communications Team published four newsletters (rather than two, as expected) during the period under review. These were published in April, May, June, and September 2020. The team incorporated feedback from the Act | West team and USAID prior to publishing each issue. The April and May newsletters focused solely on WHO guidance. The June issue featured the blog post detailing the Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire morbidity mapping activities, a video of a school director in Sierra Leone, and Act | West's phase II gender study. The September issue featured the blog post on the March 2020

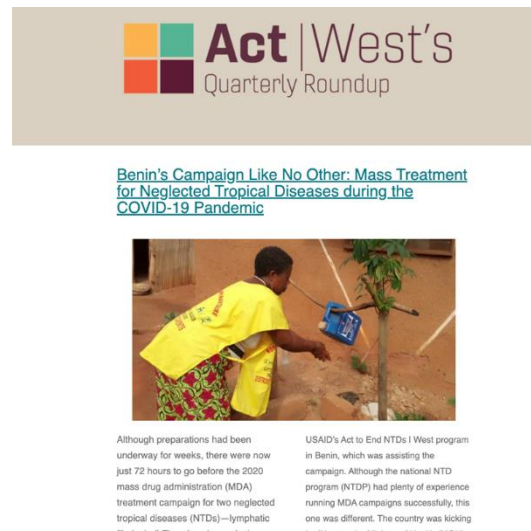
Benin MDA, Act | West's leadership at the NNN, and the new Act | West program snapshot brochure.

The team also launched a [landing webpage](#) for Act | West newsletter subscribers, to facilitate the subscription process. A newsletter subscription campaign on Twitter brought in 46 new subscribers between April 1–September 30, representing a 56% increase since the previous reporting period.

Newsletter Analytics: April 1–September 30

- ❑ 490 successful newsletter deliveries
- ❑ 189 total opens
- ❑ 46 new subscribers

Videos and interviews: During World Health Workers Week in April, the Communications Team produced and disseminated a [video of Mohammed Mansaray](#), a school principal in Sierra Leone, on [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) telling a story about how a child in his school went from poor performance to head of his class after taking PRZ to treat SCH.



September 2020 Act | West Quarterly Roundup Newsletter

The team also produced a [video of Dr. Ernest Mensah](#), Act | West Regional Technical Advisor and LF Lead, telling an engaging story about going into a community to teach people suffering from LF how to manage their symptoms and the impact this work had on the community. The video was also disseminated during World Health Workers' Week on [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

The team coordinated with HDI/Togo and HDI/HQ in the production of a video about a health post supervisor in Togo and translated the video transcript from French to English. The video was shared with USAID for review following editing and production. The team is now incorporating additional visuals and edits into the video in response to USAID's feedback.

Finally, the Communications Team and Communications Working Group members conducted and recorded on video or audio interviews during the reporting period, as follows:

- Ghana's NTD Ambassador Dr. Joyce Aryee (on NTD sustainability and advocacy)
- A disease control officer who participated in Ghana's pre-TAS
- A community drug distributor in Ghana
- Benin Country Office Program Manager Dr. Franck Sintondji and Program Officer Christian Somakpo on the March 2020 Benin MDA experience during COVID-19 (blog)
- Act | West Technical Director Achille Kabore
- Act | West Trachoma Disease Lead Stephanie Palmer

The video interview with Dr. Aryee is being edited and is under production. In addition to promoting the interview on social media, the team intends to use key pieces of its content in future blog posts on NTD sustainability. The interview with the Benin staff was conducted in French and the translation process has been initiated. The team has also begun editing the video and audio interviews with Act | West HQ staff.

Partner Shared Files > 14. Communications > Videos > Ghana NTD Amb



Interview with Ghana NTD Ambassador Dr. Joyce Aryee. Video: FHI 360/Ghana

Photo trips/gathering

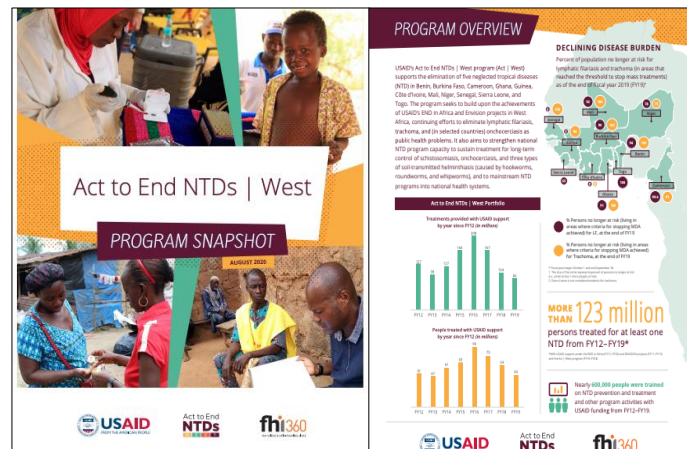
The Communications Team worked with country office staff and partners to procure photos of the Benin LF MDA, the Côte d'Ivoire LF Pre-TAS in the context of COVID-19, the 2019 Senegal MDA launch, the Guinea MDA in the context of COVID-19, and the Senegal LF Pre-TAS in the context of COVID-19. The team documented, curated, and shared the best photos, videos, and graphics on social media, the Act | West website, and with USAID, NTD program partners, and Act | West consortium partners. A selection of photos were posted on the [Act | West Flickr site](#) for use by the NTD community, the global health

community, and the general public.

The Communications Team's plan to carry out at least one photo trip during the reporting period had to be cancelled due to travel limitations relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brochures and fact sheets

The Communications Team worked with the MEL Team and Technical Leads to develop and publish (after obtaining USAID approval) the Act | West program snapshot brochure in English; the French version is expected to be published in October. The brochure has been posted on the Act | West website and shared with Act | West staff, partners, and national NTD programs. It has also been disseminated widely on social media.



Website

Act | West Program Snapshot brochure cover and overview page

During the reporting period, the Communications Team regularly updated the Act | West website with news items such as blog posts, feature stories, and announcements; resources such as the phase II gender study and presentations from the NNN 2020 conference and the LF workshop in early 2020; and various Act | West program documents. A new events section was also launched on the site.

Website analytics: April 1–September 30

- ❑ 968 users
- ❑ 1,892 sessions
- ❑ 7,697 page views
- ❑ 00:01:28 average session duration
- ❑ 53.81% bounce rate

The most popular blog was: [Mapping morbidity moves Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire toward NTD elimination](#), which garnered 159 page views, with an average time on page of 00:02:26.

Activity 2: Knowledge sharing and external engagement Thought leadership on Learning Agenda

The Act | West Communication Manager served as a co-facilitator of FHI 360's Infectious Diseases Community of Practice and the leader on NTD topics during the reporting period. The Communications Team also assumed the responsibilities of the Learning Agenda Lead (who left FHI 360 in early 2020) to support dissemination and promotion of Act | West technical and thought leadership activities.

Webinars

The Communications Team coordinated Act | West participation in several webinars during the reporting period. They liaised with the WHO NTD Communications Team, Uniting to Combat's WASH technical group, and partner World Vision to ensure participation by Zeinabou Mahamame, Cross-Sectoral Program Manager of Act | West Niger team (World Vision), in [WHO's September 2 webinar on WASH and NTDs](#). The new [events webpage](#) promoted Act | West's participation in the webinar and

Communications Working Group (CWG) members promoted the webinar on social media before, during, and after broadcasting.

The Communications Manager also began collaborating with the Act | West Technical Team and FHI 360 Corporate to plan an internal webinar, scheduled for October, to share Act | West country experiences using the restart-up matrix for NTD activities in the context of COVID-19.

International conferences

Act | West actively participated in the NNN Annual conference, September 8–10, 2020, including two Act | West-led workshops, one Act | West rapid-fire session, and one partner-led (ALM) workshop:

- “Applying a quality improvement model to neglected tropical disease program implementation: supporting programs in identifying keys for sustaining operations” was Workshop Session 2.4 on September 9, organized by FHI 360’s Kisito Ogooussan
- “Cross-sector approaches for sustainable service delivery: Integration with education and health for sustainable NTD programming,” was Rapid Fire Session RF1.D on September 9, presented by Act | West’s Arielle Dolegui, Technical Advisor, World Vision
- “Considerations for developing and deploying a cost model for post-elimination for 5 PCT NTDs” was Workshop Session 4.1 on September 10, organized by Deloitte’s Courtney Johnson
- “Innovate to Accelerate: How to apply innovative thinking and design innovative projects to accelerate progress against NTDs,” was Workshop Session 4.3 on September 10, led by Act | West partner American Leprosy Mission’s (ALM) Darren Schaupp.
- The Communications Team attended the NNN 2020 meeting and engaged in the following activities:
 - Presentations at international meetings: In August and September, the Communications Team posted an announcement on the Act | West website about Act | West leadership at the NNN annual meeting September 8–10, 2020. They also posted an events webpage that showcased and summarized the Act | West’s extensive participation in the NNN. The events webpage provides links to Act | West presentations and session recordings. They disseminated the events page and announcement on social media, in the Act | West Quarterly Roundup newsletter, and on FHI 360 organizational communities of practice groups and internal communications. Act | West Communication Working Group (CWG) members amplified these communications, as well, and FHI 360 Corporate Communications disseminated the announcement on corporate channels.
 - Took photos and shared them on social media and the Act | West website as well as with USAID, NTD program partners, and Act | West consortium partners
 - Served as a rapporteur for the workshop on QI and wrote the report for that workshop
 - Participated in workshops on the cost model for post-elimination for five PC NTDs and behavior change programming for NTDs
 - Helped promote the event prior, during, and after the meeting and actively engaged with participants and the NTD community and wider global health community on social media throughout the event
 - Coached Act | West technical staff on social media usage throughout the event
 - Sought and obtained support from FHI 360 Corporate Communications staff and other FHI 360 thought leaders to amplify Act | West messaging

Journal articles, reports and resources

A joint Act | East and Act | West peer-reviewed article was published in PLOS NTDs on June 11: *Risk factors associated with failing pre-transmission assessment surveys (pre-TAS) in lymphatic filariasis elimination programs: Results of a multi-country analysis*.

The Communications Team published 21 new resources on the [Act | West resources webpage](#). Among them were the [Gender Study Phase Two: Qualitative Gender Analysis and Gender Strategy](#); excerpts from *Community-based health care, including outreach and campaigns, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic* (in [English](#) and [French](#)); and [Applying a quality improvement model to neglected tropical diseases program implementation: supporting programs in identifying keys for sustaining operations](#).

Online & social media

During the period under review, the Communications Team published frequent content on social media channels include Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr. The team used these and other social media platforms to engage continuously with partners and the NTD and global health communities. They also developed and launched a multi-platform social media campaign to build the Act | West newsletter mailing list.

Twitter: The Communications Team produced original social media content to promote Act | West’s activities and communication products for numerous international observation periods and events such as World Water Week, World Health Workers Week, World Mosquito Day, the WHO roadmap launch lead-up, and the NNN 2020 conference. The team used [Act | West’s Twitter platform](#) strategically to promote Act | West resources such as the Phase II Gender Analysis And Strategy Report.

The team also promoted, attended, and engaged in real-time Twitter discussions on the June 25 Uniting to Combat NTDs Powering the Partnership webinar, the June 18 SpeakUp Africa NTDs and COVID-19 webinar, and the June 30 media briefing on NTDs and COVID. They also disseminated information on these events to the Act | West team.

Working with FHI 360 Corporate Communications, the team coordinated the production and featured videos of three members of the Act | West team—[Dr. Ernest Mensah](#), [Dr. Christian Somakpo](#), and [Katherine Sanchez](#)—in an FHI 360-wide Twitter campaign for World Health Workers Week in April. For that event they also disseminated a clip of a video interview with Dr. Agoro Sibabe, Chief, Kara Regional Health Center in Togo.

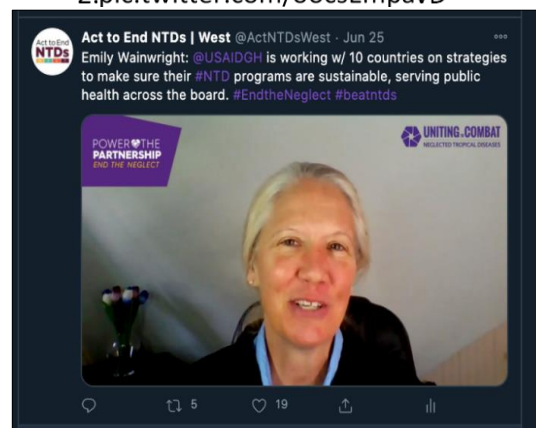
Twitter analytics: April 1–September 30

- 1.1% engagement rate
- 30.9K tweet impressions
- 52 link clicks
- 63 retweets
- 158 likes
- 125 new followers

1.pic.twitter.com/dOSney7NII



2.pic.twitter.com/oocsEmpavD



3.pic.twitter.com/v5dILUKHGU

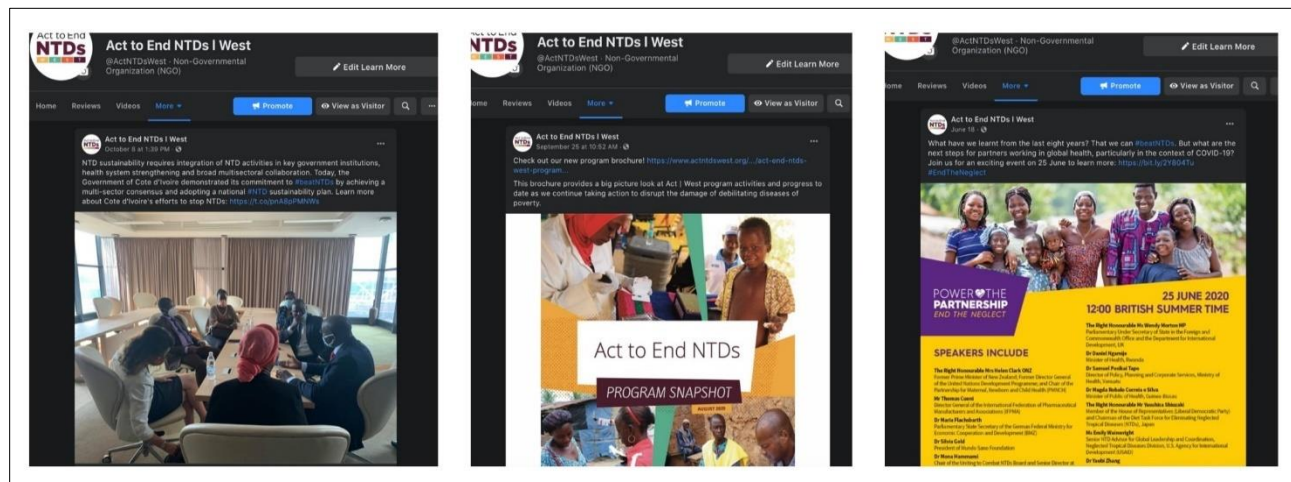


Three most popular tweets

Facebook: The Communications Team created and published ten original posts on the [Act | West Facebook Page](#) during the reporting period.

Facebook analytics:

- 175 organic reach
- 13 engagements



1. <https://bit.ly/31oot8C>

2. <https://bit.ly/3m2E068>

3. <https://bit.ly/31opaie>

Most popular posts.

YouTube: The Communications Team produced, branded, and launched an [Act | West YouTube channel](#) during the reporting period and posted three videos during the period.

Early YouTube analytics: April 1–September 30

- 60 views
- 5 new subscribers

Flickr: Although the team did not receive many photos from the 11 portfolio countries until the end of the reporting period due to the COVID-19 situation, new photos from Ghana and Sierra Leone were uploaded to the [Act | West Flickr](#) public-facing photo database. In all, 23 photos were posted to Flickr this period. (A number of these were taken prior to COVID-19, so PPE such as face masks were not required at that time. See next page.)



Trachoma screening in Cote d'Ivoire (2019). Photo: Stephanie Palmer, FHI 360



TAS in Sierra Leone (2019). Photo: HKI/Sierra Leone



MDA Togo (2020) photo HDI

Sample photos uploaded to Flickr

Ad hoc events

World NTD day activities: To continue building the momentum created by celebration of the first World NTD Day on January 30, 2020, the Communications Team has begun working with CWG members, country offices, national NTD programs, and FHI 360 Corporate Communications to plan activities for the second World NTD Day on January 30, 2021. Early activities have included encouraging countries to include World NTD Day activities in their FY21 work plans.

Partnerships

The Communications Manager continued to participate actively in the Uniting to Combat NTDs CWG, the ICTC CWG, the WHO NTD communicators group, and the NNN communication task team during the period under review; she attended multiple meetings with each during the reporting period. The Communications Team also met individually with communication counterparts from ICTC to discuss communication collaboration.

In coordination with Uniting to Combat NTDs and other partners, the Act | West Communications Team supported the production and dissemination of a multi-organizational solidarity statement/op-ed for International Youth Day (August 12) on the role of youth in supporting the fight against NTDs. It was initially published on Africa.com and picked up by eight news outlets across Africa, as follows:

- ❑ <https://rwanda.shafagna.com/EN/AL/195229>
- ❑ <https://africa.com/the-power-of-the-youth-to-end-neglected-tropical-diseases/>
- ❑ <http://www.therwandan.com/the-power-of-the-youth-to-end-neglected-tropical-diseases/>
- ❑ <http://venturesafrica.com/amastories/african-business-professionals-now-have-better-chance-of-getting-cma-certification/>
- ❑ <https://southafricatoday.net/africa/the-power-of-the-youth-to-end-neglected-tropical-diseases/>
- ❑ <https://www.lescoopsdafrique.com/ama/the-power-of-the-youth-to-end-neglected-tropical-diseases/>
- ❑ <https://www.globaldiasporanews.com/the-power-of-the-youth-to-end-neglected-tropical-diseases-african-media-agency/>
- ❑ <https://www.depechesdafrique.fr/2020/08/12/the-power-of-the-youth-to-end-neglected-tropical-diseases/>

In May, the Communications Team met with Tim Jesudsen/ICTC to coordinate on communication activities and negotiated cross-posting of the morbidity management situation analysis blog on the [ICTC website](#). The team also provided content about Act | West activities to ICTC for several ICTC quarterly updates.

The Communications Team has actively participated in WHO NTD communicators meetings on the NTD Roadmap launch lead-up (April 15, April 30, May 14, June 9, and June 24), the social media, messaging, and post-launch work stream groups (April 23 and May 21), and the WHO NTD Implementation Session (May 27). The team reviewed messaging for the planned (and subsequently postponed) WHO NTD roadmap launch and provided written feedback to the WHO messaging workstream working group coordinators. It supported planning for the June 17 WHO webinar on NTDs and COVID-19 and provided content for, promoted, and attended the webinar. In addition, the team participated in planning meetings for three WHO webinars (on WASH, NTDs and stigma/disability, and NTDs and innovation), and promoted the two WHO webinars on social media (the HSS and NTDs webinar on July 8 and the youth and NTDs webinar on July 29). During this reporting period, the Communications Team worked with the NTD Task Force to promote their African Researchers Small Grant Program on social media. The

Communications Manager also participated in three COUNTDOWN project NTD communication webinars (June 9, June 23, and July 7).

Activity 3: Communication support for IR1, IR/S, and program management activities

Templates and guides—for training materials, events

In this reporting period, the Communications Team developed a technical and policy brief template for Act | West, which was approved by USAID. The Communications Manager also began working with Deloitte on a technical brief on the NTD sustainability planning.

The Communications Team developed and disseminated the Act | West’s editorial style guide for external-facing Act | West publications, reports, and documents. It also developed and disseminated the landscape analysis report template to the IR2 team. The team has subsequently used both the style guide and template to produce nine country landscape analysis reports and has facilitated arrangements for their French translations.

During the period under review, the Communications Manager wrote the communications and KM section of the program’s six-monthly reports to USAID. The Communications Team also produced communications statistics for and wrote the communications and KM sections of the FY20 SAR1. In addition, the Communications Manager worked with HKI to edit and procure photos for a success story from Niger for the SAR1.

Press coverage tracking

Although relatively little press coverage was reported during this reporting period due to the WHO-recommended stoppage of NTD activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Communications Manager coordinated with country office staff to track and (when possible) obtain links to or copies of press coverage of Act | West program activities. During the current reporting period, the following news items were identified:

Côte d’Ivoire

1. *Lutte contre les maladies tropicales négligées: Aka Aouélé lance une distribution gratuite de médicaments visant 16 millions de personnes*
9/28/20
<https://www.fratmat.info/article/208374/Soci%C3%A9t%C3%A9/lutte-contre-les-maladies-tropicales-negligees-aka-aouele-lance-une-distribution-gratuite-de-medicaments-visant-16-millions-de-personnes>
2. *Côte d’Ivoire–AIP/ Une réunion sur l’impact de la lutte contre les maladies tropicales à Gbéléban*
9/11/20
<https://aip.ci/cote-divoire-aip-une-reunion-sur-limpact-de-la-lutte-contre-les-maladies-tropicales-a-gbeleban/>

Togo

3. *Togo– Maladies tropicales négligées: Vaste opération de déparasitage*
9/10/20
<https://www.icilome.com/actualites/886216/togo-maladies-tropicales-negligees-vaste-operation-de-deparasitage>
4. *Le ministre de la santé lance la campagne de lutte contre les maladies tropicales négligées*

9/9/20

<https://elitedafrique.com/societe/sante/le-ministre-de-la-sante-lance-la-campagne-de-lutte-contre-les-maladies-tropicales-negligees/>

Communication support for IR1, IR2 and IR3

The Communications Manager participated in weekly IR1 and IR/S coordination meetings to better coordinate on communications with technical staff. In addition, she participated in the USAID/Act | West biweekly meetings on April 2, May 14, June 11, June 25, July 9, and July 23, including a meeting with staff from NTDSC focusing on the OR agenda and collaboration between NTDSC and Act | West to better operationalize research results.

The Communications Manager also participated in the technical group that drafted and finalized the Act | West MDA and DSA restart checklists for the COVID-19 context; the Communications Team provided input and formatting support for both checklists. The Communications Manager also provided input on the joint Act | East – Act | West guidance for the restart of NTD activities and collaborated with Act | East in its dissemination.

The Communications Team edited and provided input on a PowerPoint slide deck on NTD Quality Improvement and several abstract and session submissions for the NNN and COR-NTD conferences. They provided formatting support for multiple PPT presentations for Act | West technical staff and photos and editorial support for several landscape analysis reports.

Activity 4: Communications Management

During the period under review, the Communications Manager wrote the communications and KM section of the program's FY21 HQ work plan, including the narrative, budget, and travel plan. She also presented the planned activities to the Act | West team and partners and worked with countries and partners to incorporate communications activities into their work plans.

Liaise with USAID NTD Communications Advisor (branding, guidance, sharing content, CWG)

The Communications Team met with the USAID NTD Comm Lead on April 6, May 11, June 12, July 10, August 21, and September 11 to provide monthly updates on communications activities and ensure alignment with USAID communications objectives.

The team also participated in USAID's virtual NTD Portfolio Communications Working Group meetings on April 23 and July 9. They updated the USAID NTD program communicators on Act | West's communications and KM activities and collaborated with program communicators on ways to amplify their and Act | West's communications more broadly.

The team responded to ad hoc requests from USAID, such as providing photos from the Guinea MDA restart. The team also responded to USAID feedback on the communications and KM section of the FY21 Act | West HQ work plan and made requested revisions.

Communications Working Group (CWG)

The Communications Team held ten CWG meetings during the reporting period (April 22, May 6 and 20, June 17, July 1 and July 29, August 12 and 26, and September 9 and 23). Communications staff from all partners and FHI 360 implementing countries participated, to coordinate on program communication and KM-related activities.

Communications Training

Even in the virtual environment necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Communications Team continued to seek opportunities to provide training to CWG members and Act | West staff.

The team created and conducted a survey on French language communications training needs of CWG members. It used the results to prioritize the translation and dissemination of training materials to CWG members in Act | West's Francophone countries.

The Communications Team developed and launched English and French versions of the Act | West Interview Guide and trained the FHI 360 Act | West team and the CWG on their use. The team shared the Interview Guide with the Act to End NTDs | East team, when requested. Later in the reporting period when NTD activities were about to restart, the Communications Team developed an addendum for the Interview Guide, with guidance on documenting the restart.

The team trained CWG members on USAID's new branding and marking guidance in April and disseminated and explained the use of the new branding and marking monitoring form.

Finally, the team trained all staff members in the Act | West Senegal office on the Interview Guide, success story development, and photography and videography.

Communication guidance and technical assistance

The Communications Team provided guidance and TA in a variety of areas during the reporting period. These included:

- Preparing and disseminating guidance to help countries and CWG members plan and organize in-country activities for World NTD Day
- Providing TA to the Act | West CWG on the guidance on communications and KM-related FY21 work planning and supporting FY21 work planning at the HQ and country levels, including coordinating with all Act | West countries and partners on inputs and plans for FY21 communications activities
- Providing TA on branding and marking to the Benin country office and to Act | West partner, AmeriCares, for supply chain SOPs and final reports as they closed out their work with Act | West
- Developing Act | West's new editorial style guide; its purpose is to better harmonize terminology and standardize the editorial style of all external-facing Act | West publications, reports, and documents
- Editing and providing input for a success story for the FY20 SAR1 and providing TA on country SAR1 branding and marking and content

Management of Act | West communications assets

During this reporting period, the Communications Team assisted the program in purchasing a Zoom webinar license for FY21 webinars. The team also met with FHI 360's Zoom coordinator for a language interpretation test webinar and to conduct due diligence prior to purchasing the Zoom license.

To facilitate work planning for FY21, the Communications Team conducted a camera and equipment survey for CWG members and researched viable equipment options for potential purchase for country offices that need equipment. Across the 11 Act | West country offices, the program has six cameras, two microphones/recorders, and one tripod. Consequently, seven cameras with tripods, microphones, storage devices, carrying cases, and batteries were requested in the FY21 country work plans.

Branding and Marking Plan and guidance on engaging VIPs

To ensure compliance with Act | West's Branding and Marking Plan, the Communications Team produced easy-to-use branding logo blocks for use on equipment stickers and reviewed and provided TA

on branding equipment procured with USAID funds for the Act | West Senegal office. The team also branded various Act | West documents and communication assets, including the COVID-19 NTD activity restart matrices, the landscape analysis reports, signage for NTD activities and meetings, presentations, and others.

The Communications Manager provided TA on branding and marking to Act | West partner World Vision for NTD sustainability meeting materials and to Act | West's Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Benin offices and partners HKI, Deloitte, Americares, and AIM Initiative for various materials, reports, documents, and deliverables.

Finally, the team collaborated with Act | East on document content and branding and promoted on social media the joint Act | East – Act | West guidance for the restart of NTD activities in the context of COVID-19.

MAINSTREAMING THE GENDER ANALYSIS STUDY AND STRATEGIC PLAN INTO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

During FY19 and FY20, an NTD Gender Analysis Study and Strategic Plan was conducted. It was managed and overseen by the MEL Director and led by two FHI 360 in-house gender experts. The Gender Analysis Study included two phases. Phase I entailed a literature review of gender issues with respect to NTDs, focusing on findings relevant to the 11 countries within the program portfolio and using research from published and grey sources. The literature review identified and explained gaps between males and females in households, communities, and countries, and the relevance of gender norms and power relations with respect to NTDs. The Phase I report (submitted March 31, 2019) summarized the results of the literature search. It also informed the Phase II fieldwork by identifying the gaps and opportunities that should be explored further through qualitative fieldwork data collection. Phase II of the Gender Analysis Study involved fieldwork in three countries (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone) to explore and better understand the gaps and barriers in relation to NTDs as they pertain to females and males, through the collection of qualitative data in the summer of 2019. A final document was drafted by the two FHI 360 in-house gender experts at the end of Phase II (submitted October 25, 2019), comprising two components: the gender analysis and the gender strategy. The gender analysis synthesized the results of the literature review, the results of the qualitative fieldwork and the results of a limited quantitative analysis. The gender strategy drew on the results of the gender analysis and suggested recommended areas where program implementation could be modified to rectify gender gaps and barriers—in the three countries in the Act | West portfolio where fieldwork was undertaken.

In the second half of FY20, the MEL Data Analyst/ MEL Lead took over from the MEL Director with regards to the management of the work on gender for Act | West. The gender analysis and strategy report was finalized and approved by USAID in March 2020. The gender team then distilled out the most salient set of recommendations put forth in the gender strategy from that report, and drafted a separate Gender Strategy Recommendations document, providing further detail on the activities to be undertaken to achieve the recommendations put forth in the three countries where field work took place. This document was submitted to USAID for review on June 17, 2020. Shortly after, USAID gave Act | West the green light to start working to operationalize in the three countries some of the recommendations. As such, the two FHI 360 Gender Specialists, the HKI Program Manager for Sierra Leone, and the MEL Data Analyst/ MEL Lead commenced setting up a series of meetings with each of the three FHI 360/ HKI country offices to launch discussions with the aim of reaching consensus on recommendations to operationalize in the three countries. The meetings will take place in October and

November 2020. The recommendations likely to be adopted by countries are those that dovetail most closely with existing NTD activities and generate minimal additional cost to the project or effort for NTD staff. With that in mind, pre-meeting documents have been drafted with FY21-approved project activities identified that can easily be modified to accommodate the gender recommendations; these will be shared with countries prior to the meetings. In FY21, Act | West will undertake the following activities:

- After the initial meeting with the three countries, a meeting with USAID will be convened to present the set of proposed recommendations (and activities onto which they will dovetail) identified by countries as suitable for integration into existing NTD activities. Once USAID weighs in on the selection, a second round of meetings with countries will take place. Ultimately, the end game will be a negotiated set of recommendations which will result in (minor) modifications to program implementation that and serve to rectify existing gender gaps and barriers.
- Act | West will work with NTDPs in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone to assist with the operationalization of the program modifications over the course of FY21. Note that a limited set of program intervention modifications to address identified gender gaps and barriers are envisioned for FY 2021FY21, but the operationalization of these interventions may have budgetary implications that will likely require USAID approval part way through FY 2021FY21.

BEST PRACTICES & SUCCESS STORY BENIN'S CAMPAIGN LIKE NO OTHER: MASS TREATMENT FOR NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Although preparations had been underway for weeks, there were now just 72 hours to go before the 2020 mass drug administration (MDA) treatment campaign for two neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)—lymphatic filariasis (LF) and onchocerciasis—would begin in the four geographic areas (called communes) of Ouinhi, Covè, Zagnanado, and Za-Kpota—and the tension was almost palpable. Already, a myriad phone calls were exchanged by stakeholders working with USAID's Act to End NTDs | West program in Benin, which was assisting the campaign. Although the national NTD program (NTDP) had plenty of experience running MDA campaigns successfully, this one was different. The country was kicking it off just as the Ministry of Health (MOH) was launching a national response to the novel COVID-19 pandemic, after six people in the country had tested positive for the virus.

Already, Benin had begun to put restrictions in place, including prohibitions against gatherings of more than 50 people, recommending physical distancing, and restricting public movement into and out of 12 communes (districts) considered to be most at risk for coronavirus spread. Although the latter measure was meant to isolate people in at-risk districts from the rest of the country, and thus minimize disease spread, it complicated the ability of the NTD campaign supervisory and monitoring teams to travel to and from Ouinhi.

The sudden government restrictions were unsettling for certain segments of the population. Rumors began spreading through social media and elsewhere, exacerbating pandemic-related fears and feeding public mistrust. The most viral and dangerous of these, from an MDA perspective, was a rumor that other countries were supposedly sending anti-coronavirus vaccines and medicines to Africa that, instead of protecting people, were actually intended to wipe out entire populations or render them sterile.

It was clear that carrying out a mass treatment campaign was going to be a challenge. Even though they intended to distribute the NTD medicines free of charge to populations still at risk for LF (following a surveillance survey that showed transmission was ongoing), the NTDP would need to convince people to let go of their mistrust and take the medicines. Equally important, they would need to ensure the safety of both the public and their own staff during an MDA conducted under extraordinary circumstances.

Four Pillars of Mass Treatment for NTDs in the COVID-19 Context

The NTDP and its partners consulted with other units in the MOH and with medical professionals, public health experts, and stakeholders before deciding to go ahead with the MDA in March 2020. They identified four strategic pillars necessary for MDA in the COVID-19 context: comprehensive coordination, training adaptations, social mobilization with rumor management, and enhanced supervision.

Coordination and Leadership

Effective coordination and leadership are crucial to the success of any NTD mass treatment campaign. The NTDP team and partners needed to consider so many additional unfamiliar factors as they adapted to the changing situation, making many critical decisions in the process. Through daily virtual meetings among FHI 360's Act | West program in Benin and Washington, DC, the national NTDP coordinator, and the director of public health of Zou Department, the team successfully complied with COVID-19 pandemic requirements and decrees from the Government of Benin.

After extensive consultations with the MOH and community leaders and implementing special safety and precautionary measures to protect field staff, supervisors, and community members, the NTDP team and partners went ahead with the MDA. Three important considerations that contributed to the decision to go ahead were:

- This particular MDA would be localized to just four contiguous districts that had shown evidence of ongoing transmission of LF.
- The four targeted communes were located outside the restricted access zone (known as the *cordon sanitaire*) that the MOH had put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the risk of transmission was considered to be relatively low in those communes.
- The NTD medicines would be delivered door-to-door during this MDA; thus, the campaign would not require public gatherings.

Training Adaptations

The team quickly adapted both the physical training environment and the curriculum content to fully address the new challenges. In the past, training was “cascaded” from national-level trainers to head nurses to community distributors at the health district and municipality levels. This meant delivering training to relatively large groups of people simultaneously. However, new physical distancing procedures brought by COVID-19 weren’t compatible with classroom-style training settings; instead, the team divided the trainees into smaller groups in multiple rooms and installed handwashing devices at each site to enable the trainers and trainees to practice safe hygiene.

The training curriculum was also revised to address topics related to COVID-19 and include key messages to help health workers address confusing pandemic-related rumors that threatened to interfere with the MDA. Community drug distributor (CDD)-trainees roleplayed various situations and incidents and practiced well-constructed arguments to convince the community that taking the NTD medicines was safe, necessary, and in their best interest.

CDDs were trained to follow prescribed hygiene measures strictly (e.g., using handwashing kits at each household and using the lid of the bottle or a clean spoon to provide the NTD medicines) and to practice safe physical distancing (e.g., avoiding handshakes and maintaining one meter distance between themselves and others) throughout the MDA.

In all, 32 head nurses and over 500 CDDs were trained for the March 2020 NTD mass treatment using the revised curriculum and adapted COVID-19-related safety and hygiene measures.

Social Mobilization

Sensitization meetings were held with 384 village chiefs and town criers to reassure them about the safety of the NTD drugs, address their concerns, learn about the rumors that were circulating in each community, devise strategies to manage those rumors, and discuss roles and responsibilities for the upcoming MDA.

Town criers were given announcements and messages about the MDA to disseminate in each community. The NTDP team also recruited 64 Red Cross volunteers to go door to door in the communities before the start of the campaign, reinforcing the town criers’ and chiefs’ social mobilization efforts. For three days, volunteers travelled through the villages in pairs, providing information on the targeted diseases, including how they spread, how to prevent them, and how to treat and minimize complications in people who have the diseases.

The home visits by the Red Cross volunteers helped to reassure people about the safety of the NTD medicines and provided an opportunity to address their questions. They also helped to prepare families for the CDDs' visits and dispel any confusion by reminding people that the medicines that would be provided were the very same ones they took every year to prevent NTDs. The volunteers were careful to clarify that NTD medicines were totally unrelated to the new coronavirus—they would neither make people more likely to get COVID-19 (one of the false rumors that had been circulating) nor would they prevent or cure it.

In addition to all the face-to-face efforts, local health teams also used radio programs to underscore the message that NTD mass treatment was completely unrelated to COVID-19. Local doctors were interviewed, and each repeated this same basic message to further reassure people living in their communes about the safety of taking NTD medicines. Informative public service announcements were also aired in local languages on local radio and television channels to help further prepare the communities for the upcoming MDA.

Supervision

Due to government travel restrictions, the NTDP devised a new supervision strategy for the mass treatment campaign, reducing traditional three-person teams to single supervisors. These supervisors were supplemented by the presence of local head nurses and doctors, ready to respond quickly if any COVID-19 cases were detected. These nurses and doctors were also available to monitor the work of the CDDs during the MDA.

The plainly visible, close supervision by local doctors and nurses helped curb fears among the community members, as they were able to answer questions, reinforce the messaging, and provide additional reassurance.

Mass Treatment Results

The NTDP launched Benin's March 2020 MDA in the four communes, which lasted 12 days and without incident. The recruitment of the Red Cross volunteers, local nurses, and doctors and the use of additional media coverage had positive impacts. In Ouinhi, in particular, community members who were influenced by rumors and fiercely opposed health interventions reported feeling reassured when they saw the medicines and realized that they were indeed the same ones they had received during previous MDAs.

Thanks to the coordinated planning and preparation on the part of the national NTDP and partners, preliminary results show that Benin's 2020 MDA achieved a range of 84% to 88% of treatment targets across the four communes, despite the very unique circumstances and challenges. Because the NTDP was able to adapt to the unique circumstances and deliver NTD medicines on schedule to most of the people who needed them, Benin remains on track to eliminate LF nationally by 2025.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

Management of Cooperative Agreement

- Continue to coordinate and collaborate with USAID and other NTD stakeholders through regular conference calls and/or meetings to exchange information, consult on various issues, and keep all stakeholders up-to-date on program implementation.
- Continue routine monitoring and management of consortium partners' subawards to ensure compliance with USAID reporting, spending, and regulations via virtual communication, e.g., phone calls and emails.
- Continue to provide remote TA to countries as and when needed until conditions are favorable to recommence full program implementation. We will also continue to provide technical guidance to country programs as they discuss feasibility of resuming program implementation, while prioritizing staff and community safety to implement technically high-quality program activities
- Prepare and submit to USAID all contractual Act | West award deliverables due between October 2020–March 2021:
 - FY20 SAR 2 (April–September 2020)
 - FY20 EMMRs
 - FY20 Foreign tax report
 - Quarterly financial reporting (i.e., accruals, pipeline analysis, SF-425s)
 - Quarterly aggregate serious adverse events reports
 - Monthly progress reports for October 2020–February 2021
- Process subaward modifications to increase current funding obligations for consortium partners as they near a fund's limitation threshold. Additional obligations will facilitate execution of approved FY21 work plan activities.
- Draft, finalize, and submit first tier FAAs to USAID for review, feedback, and subsequent approval—Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Senegal.
- Review, finalize, and approve second tier FAAs and subawards by end of January 2021 to facilitate a timely start of approved FY21 work plan activities.
- Begin drafting the FY21 SAR 1 for the reporting period October 2020–March 2021.
- Submit requests for approval to USAID for both restricted commodities and essential international travel as stipulated in the award.

IR1 Activities

- Continue supporting countries to restart FY20 activities interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will include close collaboration between Act | West and USAID and with countries to determine necessary steps to restart trachoma DSA activities.
- Document the resumption of activities and especially the mitigation measures and related additional costs incurred by the implementation of COVID-19 SOPs. The document will be the basis

of Act | West contribution to the NTD community knowledge sharing on COVID 19 impact on programs through the participation to the NNN working group on COVID 19 Lessons learned/Best Practices.

- Follow up with Togo's NTDP and support the laboratory work on the OV samples collected during the post MDA impact surveys.
- Attend virtual OEC meetings planned in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone for the first quarter of FY21
- The Act | West technical team will attend the ESPEN Program managers meeting planned for December 3-4, 2020
- Act West program will support Senegal and Benin NTDPs to collect and review OV epidemiological and entomological data and assist the two countries in drafting their national strategic plans for OV elimination.
- Support Togo's NTDP to review and use the SCH STH protocol to implement impact surveys. Likewise, the Act| West program, in collaboration with the NTDS, will provide technical support to finalize and roll out a protocol for LF post-validation surveillance.
- Liaise with Senegal to continue reviewing the SCH STH data and establishing an SCH/STH technical committee.
- Following the recommendation of an LF technical meeting held in August 2020 with Ghana's NTDP, WHO/ESPEN, and other partners, FHI360 will assist the NTDP Ghana NTD program to develop a plan for remapping LF in districts that are non-endemic but reporting morbidity cases.
- The Act | West team will participate in COR-NTDs and ASTMH from November 12-14 and November 15-19, 2020, respectively. A list of symposia, presentations and posters accepted by Act | West consortium members can be found in annex 2
- The trachoma technical advisor will participate in a number of trachoma-focused meetings: 1) the Trachoma Scientific Informal Workshop on November 9, 2020 and the GET 2020 meeting from November 30-December 1, 2020; 2) the Trachoma Expert Committee meeting December 8-10; and 3) RAFET (Reseau Africain Francophone des Experts du Trachome), tentatively set for January 20, 2021.
- Support Cameroon in investigations of TSS with TF results $\geq 5\%$ among children ages 1-9 years of age, as part of the Learning Agenda.
- As part of the Learning Agenda, begin work on a second trachoma focused activity on post-treatment surveillance. Specifically, the literature review of available dossiers and post-validation surveillance plans will be conducted and a web-based survey among National Trachoma Program Managers developed.
- The program implementation lead and the OV focal person will work with Senegal and Benin OV programs to develop approaches and tools as part of the learning agenda. These tools will then be improved and roll out in other countries.

- Support QI activities implementation including:
 - Training of QI coaches in Niger and Sierra Leone
 - Assist the Benin's NTDP in implementing the QI action plan developed during FY20 Q4
 - Support NTDP Ghana to write a technical brief on the country experience in implementing QI activities for the past 3 years in 15 LF hotspot districts
 - Provide support to Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea to initiate QI/QA activities
- Provide technical support for implementation of a couple of DSAs across the portfolio:
 - Guinea – high quality first pre-TAS surveys in four districts
 - Cote d'Ivoire – first TAS1 in 37 HDs and second pre-TAS in 33 HDs
 - Benin – re-TAS1
 - Cameroon – TAS1 in the last remaining LF endemic district (Akwaya) to pass TAS. Akwaya has been eligible for TAS1 since FY18 but postponed several times due to conflict in the South West region
- Work with Ghana to submit data on districts with persistent LF transmission to WHO for technical guidance.

IR 2 Activities

In FY21, Act | West anticipates achieving the milestones detailed below, some of which are carryover activities from FY20 postponed due to COVID-19. Moving forward, all scheduling will depend on COVID-19-related travel and meeting policies and the availability of NTDPs and in-country/regional partners.

Activities Carried Over from FY20

- Conduct guided self-assessment workshops in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Act | West will support NTDPs to conduct guided self-assessment workshops to establish baselines and identify sustainability goals, milestones, and activities using the SMM. Act | West will facilitate the guided self-assessments during three-day in-country workshops with national stakeholders. In each country, the guided self-assessment findings will be reviewed, vetted, and finalized during focus group and individual discussions, followed by a participatory meeting with relevant stakeholders.
- Complete sustainability planning workshops in Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Act | West will facilitate a second wave of sustainability planning workshops for NTDPs to develop Sustainability Plans and identify interventions and solutions for priority areas. Deloitte, World Vision, and Helen Keller will provide technical support (in coordination with FHI 360 and country IPs) to NTDPs in developing initial outlines or drafts of their plans, planning the workshop events (identifying stakeholder participants, developing materials, preparing logistics), and preparing to co-facilitate the workshops. Sustainability planning workshops, which serve as technical input and validation sessions, will be held in country over four-day periods, with enough time for break-out discussions on each of the six sustainability outcomes.

- Complete joint landscape analyses in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. The Act | West team will complete the joint landscape analyses (HSS and cross-sector) that started in FY20 in each country except Burkina Faso. Deloitte, World Vision, Helen Keller, and FHI 360 will join efforts to complete the reports of these assessments.
- Official Launch of Multi-sector Coordination Platforms in Ghana, Mali, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. World Vision will support the Ghana NTDP to organize a workshop (October 12–14, 2020) to develop and validate a work plan for the ICCC. The work plan will stipulate opportunities and activities to be implemented. This plan will be owned by ICCC and will determine the multi-sector activities going forward and will be aligned with country Sustainability Plan interventions. World Vision will provide TA to the NTDPs in Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone to finalize the working documents of the respective cross-sector coordination mechanisms and their official launches. These will be opportunities to hold high-level government engagement meetings to enhance visibility of the respective Sustainability Plans and Multisector Coordination Platforms.
- NTD-WASH UP! Pilot Implementation in Ghana (Date to be determined): Schools have been selected for the pilot implementation of the integrated NTD-WASH UP! curriculum. The pilot will be scheduled after schools re-open for the next school year.

Activities Planned for the First Six Months of FY21

- Conduct or support TIPAC data entry in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Act | West will support NTDPs to collect, consolidate, and enter NTD programmatic and funding data and national demographic data into the TIPAC tool and perform forecast over five years. Deloitte will provide TA as appropriate to help countries as they conduct data collection and entry—including guidance on the types of data to collect and how to best prepare for and conduct the data entry.
- Conduct TIPAC data analysis workshops in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. After completing the TIPAC data entry activity, a follow-up activity will analyze and forecast funding gaps for each country. Act | West will support NTDP staff to perform accurate financial gap analyses. Act | West will also guide NTDPs in conducting multi-year budget projections (over five years) using the TIPAC. Prior to the data analyses, Act | West will work with the NTDPs to identify parameters for in-depth analysis based on country-specific needs and challenges.
- Complete the development and pilot of the Economic Impact Model. Deloitte will finalize and test the model for the investment case to support Sustainability Plans following agreement with USAID on country and disease selection. Feedback gathered from the NTDP on any challenges related to translating the data from the Economic Impact Model into an investment case, as well as other information that would be helpful to capture, will help the development team refine and finalize the model. The refined version will be discussed with USAID and a plan developed for country roll out.
- Facilitate political validation and endorsement of the Sustainability Plans in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, and Togo. Act | West will continue facilitating political validation and endorsement of Sustainability Plans. While two countries initiated the political validation and endorsement process (Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal) in FY20, Act | West will continue to support Senegal, Ghana and Togo upon completion of their plans. The plans will outline the targets, milestones, and activities that the NTDPs and relevant stakeholders will pursue to strengthen the NTDPs' sustainability and mainstream NTD interventions. Act | West will support NTDPs to obtain MOHs' endorsement to

disseminate the plans to relevant stakeholders through one-day political validations. The Sustainability Plans will become the roadmaps for all NTDP activities for a period of three or five years, depending on the country.

- Support Ghana NTD Ambassador to hold an annual advocacy meeting with policymakers and key stakeholders from all relevant sectors, including the private sector, on the NTD Sustainability Agenda in Ghana. World Vision will provide TA to the NTD Ambassador in collaboration with the GHS/NTDP to hold a high-level advocacy meeting to engage key stakeholders across the government, private sector, civil society, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and faith leaders. The objective of this meeting will be to solicit support, raise visibility, and increase buy-in from a high level.
- Organize an NTD learning symposium at the WASH annual conference (MOLE Conference)/ Ghana National Level Learning Alliance Platform to share lessons learned on WASH-NTD collaboration and further advocate for NTD and WASH integrated programming at all levels (October 27–30, 2020). World Vision will collaborate with the NTDP to host a learning symposium event at the annual Mole Conference in Ghana on the nexus of NTDs and WASH. This will build conversation around WASH and NTDs, learn from successful eradication and elimination programs such as Guinea Worm and trachoma, highlight key research areas to explore, and identify cost-effective and innovative interventions that will advance WASH-NTD collaboration.
- Advocate for routine participation of a multi-sector coordination platform representative (Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone) in MOH strategic coordination and planning technical working groups and other coordinating bodies as relevant. World Vision will support the NTD programs to identify key coordinating bodies and technical groups relevant to advancing NTD sustainability priorities and advocate for their routine participation and involvement with the respective structures' executive bodies.
- Convene high-level stakeholder technical meeting in Niger with key leaders in relevant cross-sector Ministries (specifically Secretary General and Directions of Programming) to review and advocate for strategic alignment and integration of NTDs in sector policies relevant for NTDs. World Vision will support the NTDP to identify, review, and analyze policies and plans that are relevant for NTDs and advocate for the strategic alignment and integration of NTDs in the respective and relevant sector policies as a critical step towards integrated service delivery in Niger.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- Continue to offer STTA to promote the accurate and effective use of a broad range of data quality improvement tools (including the SCT during MDAs, CESs after MDAs, and DQAs after MDAs) in select countries. Direct in-country support for these activities will resume once restrictions due to COVID-19 on international travel are lifted.
- Implement the strategy outlined in the FY21 HQ work plan in relation to country NTD databases. The MEL Team will undertake direct interviews with in-country teams to verify information on the status of the country NTD databases in order to refine the strategy and tailor it to each individual country. Generally speaking, assistance will be provided on the three main elements defined as part of the strategy: training on and promotion of the use of CIND, assistance in finding data clerks to populate the databases with historical NTD data, and support towards the use of secure data platforms in select countries. See the FY21 HQ work plan for specific details.

- Continue to remotely monitor and help to troubleshoot the ongoing fieldwork where ESPEN Collect is being used as an EDC platform in Benin for TAS2, Burkina Faso for pre-TAS and TAS1/2, and Senegal for pre-TAS. The MEL team will also continue to remotely monitor and help troubleshoot the ongoing fieldwork in Niger, where ONA is being used as an EDC platform for pre-TAS. Finally, Act | West will actively encourage the use of EDC in general (ESPEN Collect or ONA) for all countries undertaking DSAs in FY21.
- Develop and deliver to USAID a set of up-to-date BELF and BETR projection tools for all 11 countries in the portfolio by December 2020. In addition, MEL will engage in discussions with Act | East and USAID on some potential structural changes to the existing LF and Trachoma Survey Trackers. These changes will allow for better monitoring of survey progress by the programs.
- Continue to work with PHII, USAID, and Act | East as part of the joint Task Force to collaborate in planning, communicating, and implementing the development of and transition to the future database and data system. Between October and December, Act | West, as part of the Task Force, will engage with BAO Systems, the contractor hired to adapt and develop the DHIS2 system. During these three months, Act | West (along with Act | East and USAID) will help BAO Systems gain a better understanding of the current USAID NTD database and the requirements for the future NTD database through a “discovery phase” prior to beginning development work in January 2021.
- Once the new Epidemiologist is in place, a Learning Agenda Task Force will be established and operationalized to help define a framework and process to advance learning activities. Work will continue the four existing Learning Agenda activities.

Gender Action Plan and Strategy

- Enter into a set of discussions with USAID and the country NTDPs to arrive at a consensus on the set of recommendations to operationalize in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, and Sierra Leone.
- Work with NTDPs in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, and Sierra Leone to assist operationalizing the program modifications over the course of FY21.

Communications and Knowledge Management

- Lead or support the planning, development, implementation, and amplification of World NTD Day activities in the Act | West countries.
- Disseminate the Act | West program snapshot brochure in English; finalize work on the French version of the brochure and publish and disseminate it.
- Produce data and content for 11 Act | West country webpages, which will also be used to create 11 country factsheets.
- Support communication activities for the Côte d’Ivoire Sustainability Plan political validation meeting and launch.
- Produce content on and promote Act | West’s participation in the COR-NTD and ASTMH conferences on the Act | West website and social media.
- Develop or publish articles, blogs, or social media posts on the following topics:
 - Guinea MDA in the context of COVID-19

- Treating LF—Even in the desert
 - NTD Sustainability Plan political validation in Côte d’Ivoire
 - NTD sustainability sensitization in Ghana
- Provide communications support and guidance to help technical staff submit at least one manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.
- Incorporate USAID feedback into the Togo video and finalize and disseminate it on the Internet, social media, and in Togo.
- Continue editing/production of the video interview with the Ghana NTD ambassador.
- Support Act | West’s participation in an internal FHI 360 webinars in October on the NTD activity restart matrix in the context of COVID-19; support its participation in other webinars scheduled in the first two quarters of FY21.
- Support the NNN communications task team in editing, producing, and promoting the NNN 2020 conference final report.
- Publish frequent content on Twitter and other social media platforms and continue to engage with partners via social media and attendance at meetings of NTD communicators. Hold regular biweekly meetings with the Act | West CWG.
- Provide TA to Act | West staff and partners on branding and communications.
- Continue participation in WHO communicators and NTD webinar working group meetings.

Annex 2: LIST OF SYMPOSIA

ABSTRACTS AND PROPOSALS FOR CONFERENCES		LEAD AUTHOR	CONTRIBUTORS	MODERATOR, PANELISTS	CATEGORY
ASTMH – Symposia and Scientific Sessions					
1	<p>Overcoming the deworming cliff: Challenges in maintaining mass treatment for Soil Transmitted Helminths when Lymphatic Filariasis program stops.</p> <p>Presentations/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Status of STH in districts where LF MDA has stopped in Mali – Results of TAS/STH surveys – Dr. Mamadou Traore 2. Controlling Soil Transmitted Helminths in complex Lymphatic Filariasis and loasis endemic settings in Cameroon – Dr. George Nko Ayissi 3. LF elimination and STH control in Haiti – Success and Challenges – Dr. Abdel Direny 4. Togo's plans for controlling Soil Transmitted Helminths post elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis – Prof Monique Dorkenoo 	Chair: Achille Kabore	Co-Chair: Pauline Mwinzi (WHO/ESPEN)	Dr. Mamadou Traore Dr. George Nko Ayissi Dr. Abdel Direny Pr. Monique Dorkenoo	Symposium - Approved
2	<p>Onchocerciasis Elimination Mapping in four countries in Africa: Ensuring that no village is left behind</p> <p>Chair: Achille Kabore</p> <p>Presentations/Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Challenges in assessing the needs for mapping of onchocerciasis in Niger – Dr. Salissou Adamou 2. Progress of Onchocerciasis elimination mapping in security compromised districts – Mr. Moussa Sow 	Chair: Achille Kabore	Co-chairs: Louise Hamil (Sight Savers) Daniel Boakye (End Fund)	Dr. Salissou Adamou Mr. Moussa Sow Dr. Chukwuma Anyaika Dr. Rassul Nala	Symposium - Approved

ABSTRACTS AND PROPOSALS FOR CONFERENCES		LEAD AUTHOR	CONTRIBUTORS	MODERATOR, PANELISTS	CATEGORY
	3. Onchocerciasis elimination mapping in Nigeria – a tale of two diagnostics. -Dr. Chukwuma Anyaie 4. Onchocerciasis elimination mapping where there is no onchocerciasis programme – Dr. Rassul Nala				
3	Developing a conceptual framework for trachoma mapping desk reviews in the context of nearing elimination targets: a participatory multi-country exercise.	Stephanie Palmer			Presentation - late breaker Approved
4	Stopping mass drug administration for trachoma in 15 health districts in Guinea	Christelly Badila Flore HKI - Guinea			Scientific session presentation - Approved
5	Use of Supervisor's Coverage Tool to Improve Quality and Coverage for Lymphatic Filariasis Mass Drug Administration in Agadez Region, Niger	Salissou Adamou NTDP - Niger			Scientific session presentation - Approved
6	Supervision of mass drug administration for lymphatic filariasis and onchocerciasis using the Supervisors Coverage Tool (SCT) in Sierra Leone	Habib Kamara NTDP- Sierra Leone			Scientific session presentation - Approved
7	Results of trachoma surveillance surveys in 21 health districts of the Far North and the North regions of Cameroon at least two years after stopping mass drug administration	Bella Assumpta NTDP - Cameroon			Scientific session presentation - Approved
8	Sustained interruption of lymphatic filariasis transmission in 55 endemic health districts of Central, North, Far North and Adamaoua regions, Cameroon	Georges NKO'Ayissi NTDP - Cameroon			Scientific session presentation - Approved
9	Improving mass drug administration coverage for lymphatic filariasis in 2019 based on sub-district level data analysis	Mustapha Sonnie HKI - Sierra Leone			Scientific session presentation - Approved
10	Sustaining Interruption of Transmission for Lymphatic Filariasis in Eight Districts in Sierra Leone	Abdulai Conteh NTDP - Sierra Leone			Scientific session presentation - Approved

ABSTRACTS AND PROPOSALS FOR CONFERENCES		LEAD AUTHOR	CONTRIBUTORS	MODERATOR, PANELISTS	CATEGORY
11	Promoting Operational & Financial Sustainability for Neglected Tropical Disease Programs in West Africa: Tools to estimate the costs and benefits and support sustainability planning: Act West NTDs is a USAID-funded project supporting 11 countries in West Africa to achieve elimination and control goals of the five PCT diseases.	Courtney S. Johnson Deloitte Consulting, Arlington, VA, United States	Co-Chair Justin Tine FHI 360, Accra, Ghana	Mary Hodges HKI, Freetown, Sierra Leone Walter Ochieng CDC, Atlanta, GA, United States Dr. Benjamin Marfo Ghana NTDP, Accra, Ghana Dr Fatou Ndiaye Badiane Senegal NTDP, Dakar, Senegal	Symposium - Approved
12	Multisectoral collaboration for NTDs: Barrier analyses and opportunities for multisector coordination to sustain NTD programming	Arielle Dolegui WV-US	Stephen Omunyidde WV-US	Dr Oumar Sarr, Senegal- MSAS Ms. Doris Bah, Sierra Leone- MoHS Dr. Benjamin Marfo, Ghana- NTDP Arielle Dolegui- Moderator Gagik Karapetyan – Co-chair Stephen Omunyidde – Chair	Symposium - Approved
13	Closing the Neglected Tropical Diseases Cross Sector Coordination Gap: An Organizational Network Analysis to Sustain Elimination and Control Objectives in Ghana	Arielle Dolegui WV-US	Stephen Omunyidde	Arielle Dolegui Stephen Omunyidde	Poster Presentation – Approved
COR-NTD 2020					
14	Tackling trachoma endgame challenges: What are the operations research priorities to enhance trachoma elimination and sustain gains	Jeremiah Ngondi	Stephanie Palmer		Symposium - Approved
15	Country Perspectives on Mainstreaming NTD Functions and Services within the Health System: The NTD 2030 Roadmap calls for mainstreaming NTDs into existing health systems and service delivery infrastructure. Operational research (OR) is needed to understand how technical and political barriers affect mainstreaming, including contextual, sequencing, and mitigation concerns.	RTI	Justin Tine (FHI360) David Glohi (FHI360) Courtney Johnson (Deloitte) Arielle Dolegui (WV-US) Stephen Omunyidde (WV-US)	Mr. Stephen Kitinya – MOH, Tanzania Nana Esi Inkoom – (Ghana Education Services) Dr. Mubangizi Alfred – MOH, Uganda Christelle GBAYORO (Finance Department, MOH/ Cote d'Ivoire)	Symposium - Approved

Annex 3: IR2 Cancelled FY20 Activities

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OF CANCELED FY20 ACTIVITY	RATIONALE FOR ACTIVITY CANCELLATION
Sierra Leone	Sustainability Plan political validation	Will no longer fall under Deloitte budget but will be covered by FAA in FY21.
Sierra Leone	Develop advocacy roadmap	Shift in country priorities due to COVID-19 response; will be integrated into resource mobilization advocacy TA in FY21, which will be informed by the NTD sustainability plan priorities.
Ghana	Sustainability Plan political validation	Will no longer fall under TA partner budget but will be covered by FAA in FY21.
Ghana	Update existing advocacy plan	Will be integrated into resource mobilization advocacy TA in FY21, which will be informed by the NTD Sustainability plan priorities.
Guinea	Analysis of new community health workers policy	Shift in country priorities; re-planned in FY21 with a different approach than originally planned in FY20.
Guinea	Consortium kick-off	This was found to be no longer needed at this point in time.
Guinea	Create advocacy plan and follow-on TA	Shift in country priorities. Act West launch in Guinea is no longer relevant.
Guinea	TIPAC data entry and analysis for FY20	Shift in country priorities due to adverse events related to an integrated MDA in March 2019.
Mali	TIPAC data entry and analysis for FY20	Shift in country priorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Niger	TIPAC data entry and analysis for FY20	Shift in country priorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Benin	Sustainability Plan political validation	Will no longer fall under TA partner's budget but will be covered by FAA in FY21.
Togo	Sustainability Plan political validation	Will no longer fall under TA partner's budget, but will be covered by FAA in FY21.
Togo	Create Advocacy Plan: The NTDP will engage Deloitte to create an advocacy plan. The plan will be closely tied to the sustainability objectives and will indicate next steps to achieve those objectives; parties will engage these to increase the influence and reach of the NTDP.	This will now be part of the Sustainability Plan development workshop, which has been carried over to FY21.
Burkina Faso	Create Advocacy Plan: Deloitte will support NTDP to elaborate a plan that will include resource mobilization objectives, policy changes, and cross sector partnerships—which will support NTDP in reaching sustainability objectives.	Sustainability objectives will be captured during the guided self-assessment and Sustainability Plan development workshops. Advocacy or strategic engagement activities will be implemented based on Sustainability Plan priorities.
Burkina Faso	Targeted TA: Deloitte will support NTDP finance and communication staff to implement one high-level intervention under the resource mobilization and advocacy plan. This intervention in FY20 will most likely focus on budget advocacy and	Sustainability objectives will be captured during the guided self-assessment and Sustainability Plan development workshops. Advocacy or strategic engagement activities will be implemented based on Sustainability

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OF CANCELED FY20 ACTIVITY	RATIONALE FOR ACTIVITY CANCELLATION
	making key budget stakeholders aware of NTDP's mission.	Plan priorities.
Cameroon	Consortium Kick-off: Collaboration with partners ensure they work efficiently. Targeted TA: Identify counterparts and build ownership. Review and assess existing program budgeting tool.	This was found to be no longer needed at this point in time.
Cameroon	Financial Analysis: Financial gap analysis to determine program budget gaps for future messaging with finance staff only. Develop targeted messages for advocacy and resource mobilization with Comm Team. Create messages from program-specific data following the financial gap analysis training. Conduct a rapid assessment to understand current program state and identify future sustainability priorities.	Other partners lead these activities in Cameroon. Act West will only support targeted activities as requested by the NTDP.
Côte d'Ivoire	Consortium Kick-off: Collaboration so partners will work efficiently together	This was found to be no longer needed at this point in time.
Côte d'Ivoire	Ecosystem mapping: Deloitte will provide technical support to the NTDP to perform an ecosystem mapping to identify potential organizations (local government, private sector) to develop strategic social partnership) to support domestic resource mobilization. This will now become part of updating the advocacy plan and creating investment cases for specific stakeholders.	This will be part advocacy TA in FY21 to support implementation of Sustainability Plan (if it is still relevant to the NTDP).
Senegal	Advocacy interventions plan incorporation: Review advocacy plan and determine areas of overlap and prioritize interventions to include in the Sustainability Plan with Comm Team. Collaborate in this process with Speak Africa, who supported the NTDP to develop the NTD advocacy plan.	This became part of the Sustainability Plan workshop, which took place at the end of FY20. Integrating advocacy interventions into the Sustainability Plan will continue to happen as the plan is finalized and implemented following the workshop, with support from Deloitte and partners.
Senegal	Strategic Partnerships: Conduct overview of strategic partnerships and ecosystem mapping.	This will be part of advocacy TA in FY21 if it is still relevant to the NTDP.
Senegal	Strategic Partnerships: Create materials and hold meetings with potential partners to form a strategic partnership. Prior to this workshop Deloitte will work closely with the Unit in charge of private sector within the MOH/DPRS and assess opportunity provided by the agreement the MOH signed with local government to support health-related intervention at decentralized level.	This will be part of advocacy TA in FY21 if it is still relevant to the NTDP.

ACT | WEST COUNTRIES SAR

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Mali
- Niger
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Togo



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1– September 30, 2020

BENIN

Date: November 15, 2020

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of the Act to End NTDs | West Program, led by FHI 360 in partnership with Helen Keller International, Health and Development International, Deloitte, World Vision, AmeriCares, and The AIM Initiative under Cooperative Agreement No. 7200AA18CA00011 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AccelerateTE	Accelerate Trachoma Elimination
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
Co-RUP	Co-Responsable d'Unité Pédagogique (Pedagogical Unit Deputy Chief)
CP	Conseiller Pédagogique (Pedagogical Advisor)
CRP	Chef de Région Pédagogique (Head of School District)
DDEMP	Direction Départementale de l'Enseignement Maternelle et Primaire (Departmental Directorate of Kindergarten and Primary Education)
DPP	Direction de la Programmation et de la Prospective (Directorate of Programming and Foresight)
EDC	Electronic Data Capture
EPIRF	Epidemiological Reporting Form (WHO)
ESPEN	Expanded Special Project for Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (WHO AFRO)
FTS	Filaria Test Strip
FY	Fiscal Year
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MMDP	Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OV	Onchocerciasis
PNLMT	Programme National de Lutte contre les Maladies Transmissibles (National Program for Control of Communicable Diseases)
RUP	Responsable d'Unité Pédagogique (Pedagogical Unit Chief)
SCH	Schistosomiasis
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminths
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TV	Television

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the reporting period (April 1– September 30, 2020), the Act | West program in Benin—along with the rest of West Africa and the world—confronted the spread of COVID-19. At the end of March 2020, the government of Benin put in place several safeguards to limit the spread of the virus, including establishing a sanitary cordon to restrict movement, limiting public gatherings, and requiring people to wear masks in public. This has resulted in the suspension of several MOH-led NTD activities until the epidemic can be contained.

Benin was one of very few countries that conducted mass drug administration (MDA) since the outbreak of COVID-19. With support from Act | West, Benin successfully completed enhanced MDA for Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) in four health districts (HDs) and Onchocerciasis in three HDs in April 2020.

In June 2020, Act | West supported a trachoma pre-mapping desk review in the districts of Bantè, Savalou, Dassa-Zoumè, Glazoué, Savè, and Ouèssè districts to determine whether trachoma is suspected in these six districts and whether baseline trachoma mapping is indicated. Results indicated that trachoma is not suspected in the six districts and that a mapping will not be required.

In September 2020, Act | West was approved to re-start activities in Benin. The Act | West team worked closely with the Programme National de Lutte contre les Maladies Transmissibles (PNLMT) to identify a timeline of FY20 activities. In September, this included successful completion of pre-re-TAS in four HDs that failed TAS1 in FY18 and an NTD Steering Committee meeting, which focused on social mobilization mechanisms and strategies for successful implementation of upcoming school-based Schistosomiasis and Soil-Transmitted Helminths (SCH/STH) MDA campaign, as well as Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) and Transmission Assessment Survey 2 (TAS2), during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

During this period, FHI 360 successfully completed the registration process in Benin. This was accomplished through the leadership of the Act | West Project Manager in Benin with support from the Act | West HQ team as well as FHI 360 Enterprise Services. This will enable the Act | West team to move forward with finalization of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the PNLMT, which is a prerequisite for signature of Fixed Amount Awards.

Act | West Benin also made progress towards finalizing recruitment of a Senior Human Resources and Logistics Officer. The team has also commenced recruitment of a driver, following confirmation that the Act | West Benin vehicle will be delivered in November 2021. Both positions are expected to be hired during Q1 of FY21.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

Planned activities in FY20

- Annual PC NTD review meeting (for FY19 activities) and Ministry of Health (MOH) PC NTD annual planning meeting (for FY20 activities)

Previously scheduled for November 2019, this activity was initially postponed to Q4 in FY20 as only one of the three planned mass drug administration (MDA) campaigns had been implemented by the end of April 2020. By the end of FY20, neither of the two remaining MDA campaigns had been implemented, due to COVID-19. Therefore, the National Program for Control of Communicable Diseases (PNLMT) decided to postpone this activity to FY21, once both the FY20 SCH/STH and Onchocerciasis (OV) MDAs have been implemented.

- OV cross-border meeting with Togo

This meeting, initially planned for August 2020, has been canceled due to the COVID-19-related travel restrictions. The Togo border remains closed as of September 2020, preventing teams from travelling. In addition, neither of the countries were able to implement their OV MDA campaigns, a prerequisite for the FY20 meeting. The next cross-border meeting will be organized in FY21.

- OV/LF expert committee meeting

These meetings were canceled due to suspension of all community-based activities following the COVID-19 outbreak. Because of the pause in activities, neither the FY20 OV MDA nor the OV epidemiological assessment were implemented. The results of the OV epidemiological assessment are crucial to make any decision regarding OV elimination in the country. Moreover, the PNLMT was unable to develop a draft of the OV elimination plan during the reporting period. Having a draft to review is a prerequisite to conduct the OV/LF expert committee meeting, so the meeting has been postponed to FY21.

- Meeting with all partners supporting NTD activities

This meeting, the first of its kind, took place on June 12, 2020 and was attended by 25 participants from all the projects supporting the NTD program in the fight against NTDs in Benin including Act | West (FHI 360), ASCEND and AcceleraTE projects implemented by Sightsavers, Sightsavers International, ANESVAD, DeWorm3, WHO's NTD focal point, and representatives from USAID Benin and the MOH. It was an opportunity to learn more about each project and set up a formal collaboration framework to promote synergy in the fight against NTDs at country level. In addition, the NTD Program took the opportunity to share with the implementing partners the gaps not supported by the current interventions and launched a call for additional assistance.

- FY21 work planning workshops

The first meetings (from June 2 to 5) between FHI 360 Benin and PNLMT staff were essential to develop the list of 2021 workplan activities. During those meetings, FHI 360 staff shared important documents like USAID technical flag, guidance around the Act | West work planning process, and the various work plan templates with the PNLMT. The output of this meeting was a first draft of the list of FY21 activities and a timeline for work planning process.

According to the pre-established work plan review process, FHI 360 HQ and Benin held a virtual meeting with USAID staff on June 11. During this meeting, proposed activities were discussed, and suggestions were made as to how to justify activities falling under category 2 and 3 of the USAID technical flags to ensure their approval. Act | West also noted recommendations from USAID on how to streamline planned travel improve efficiency.

The third workshop (June 22–24), which brought together both PNLMT and FHI 360 key actors in Lokossa for two and a half days, focused on the development of the workplan narrative and completion of associated files including workbooks, appendices, and tables. It was also an opportunity to identify activities that will be implemented under FAAs and develop a preliminary schedule and the draft budget.

Following review and constructive discussion and feedback, the FY21 Benin workplan was approved on September 18, 2020.

NTD Secretariat

- Operational cost and supplies

While the registration of FHI 360 in Benin and making the Cotonou office fully operational is in progress, the project team came up with a strategy to complete some of the material acquisition processes and provide communication packages. For example, Act | West has been directly procuring communication credits for the PNLMT.

- Vehicle maintenance

PNLMT did not submit a vehicle repair invoice for general maintenance during the reporting period.

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

Planned activity in FY 2020 (*activities in this section are more aligned with sustainability. Activities are thus shifted to sustainability section*).

- PC NTD Steering Committee meetings

The second PC NTD Steering Committee meeting scheduled for FY20 was held on September 30 and focused on the social mobilization mechanisms and strategies to be developed for successful implementation of upcoming school-based schistosomiasis/soil-transmitted Helminths (SCH/STH) MDA campaign, as well as Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) Transmission Assessment Survey 2 (TAS2), during the COVID-19 pandemic. The one-day meeting gathered staff from the PNLMT and FHI 360, participants from primary education sector, the head of the national school parents' association, and some members of the teachers' union. After presenting the targeted districts for upcoming SCH/STH MDA and the remaining activities planned for 2020, it was determined that it is necessary to conduct the COVID-19-related social mobilization activities before the beginning of the MDA. During this upcoming activity, the teams will sensitize local authorities, teachers, and parents of school aged children on the necessary COVID-19-related safety measures that will be in place during the upcoming campaign, address the most widespread

rumors and reduce the community mistrust at the same time. The last steering committee meeting planned for FY20, which will focus on cross-sector collaboration and alternatives to sustain SCH/STH control activities, has been postponed to FY21.

Mapping

- Hospital files review to determine indications of trachoma infection (desk review) in Bantè, Savalou, Dassa-Zoumè, Glazoué, Savè, and Ouèssè districts

The purpose of the hospital files review (or a “trachoma pre-mapping desk review”) was to learn whether trachoma was suspected in these six districts and determine whether baseline trachoma mapping is indicated. This activity started in early June with a situation analysis that collected information on health care, water, sanitation, hygiene at the central level. A field visit was then conducted during the week of June 15. Data was collected through interviews and review of clinical data in registers by the PNLMT’s trachoma focal point who was assisted by a senior ophthalmological officer. Interviews and register reviews were conducted in health zone hospitals and selected district health centers, as well as within some communities (among traditional healers, village chiefs, and similar resource persons). Results indicated that trachoma is not suspected in the six districts and that a mapping will not be needed. Once the draft study report was available, a restitution session was held on June 16 with PNLMT, FHI 360 staff, and the WHO NTD focal point. At the end of this session, the NTD program decided to hold off on a decision to conduct desk reviews in the remaining 44 districts (or a proportion of these districts) as part of FY21 planning. A new discussion will be conducted on this aspect during FY22 work planning process.

- Mapping of trachoma in Ouèssè, Bantè, Savalou, Dassa-Zoumè, Glazoué, and Savè districts

This activity has been canceled based on results of the trachoma desk review in those districts.

MDA coverage

- Enhanced MDA for LF in four districts and MDA for OV in three districts

Act to End NTDs | West supported the PNLMT’s enhanced LF MDA in the four districts of Covè, Ouinhi, Zagnanado, and Za-Kpota from March 29–April 8. Three (Ouinhi, Zagnanado, and Za-Kpota) of the four districts were also targeted for OV MDA. Covè district implemented its second round of enhanced MDA following its TAS1 failure, and the other three districts implemented their third round (necessary because the first round was not considered enhanced MDA). In addition to the measures for TAS failures, the PNLMT has increased and boosted pre-MDA activities with special emphases on training, social mobilization through village chiefs, town criers, and Red Cross volunteers, as well as essential operational procedures to be adopted during the ongoing health situation. MDA processes have been strengthened with closer supervision by personnel from the different levels of the health pyramid, and scrutiny of CDDs’ performance to ensure high level quality, increased coverage, and respect of essential health measures to avoid COVID-19 transmission. CDDs distributed the drugs under the supervision of supervisors from different levels of the health pyramid (sub-district nurses, district, and health zone-level chief medical officers, NTD focal points, one PNLMT staff person, and two FHI 360 staff). The campaign lasted 12 days. Act | West reimbursed transport for 540 volunteer CDDs for the 12-day campaign needed to reach all areas where they conduct the treatment. All districts reported satisfactory reported MDA coverage, ranging from 84.11% to 87.36%. A total of 262,386 persons were treated out of 307,229 targeted (total population) for a combined coverage rate of 85.78%.

Act | West published an article on the program website describing implementation during COVID-19. The story can be found [here](#).

- Printing of nurses reporting book for LF/OV MDA

The printing process started in March 2020 and was completed in April 2020. The districts targeted for LF campaign have received their books, and the remaining stock is ready to be dispatched for the upcoming OV MDA.

- Printing of reporting forms for SCH/STH MDA

The printing process started in March 2020 and was completed in April 2020. The stock is ready to be dispatched for the upcoming SCH/STH MDA.

- Conduct SCH/STH MDA in 34 SCH endemic districts and 23 SCH/STH co-endemic districts

This activity was previously scheduled to take place in March/April 2020 but was postponed to October 2020 due to COVID-19. The administrative process is ongoing so as to implement the MDA by the end of October.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

- Airing of commercials and shows on national TV and radio for LF MDA

From March 29–April 9, 2020, Act | West procured airtime on radio and TV stations to broadcast commercials and announcements in the four districts targeted for LF MDA. Details of this social mobilization activity are included in the country's first semi-annual report.

Training

- Training for Pre-re-TAS in four districts

This training, held in Bohicon for two days (September 24–25), gathered 18 implementing actors (12 surveyors, four recorders, and two supportive supervisors) and central level supervisors (composed of both PNLMT and FHI 360 staff). In addition to the training modules relating to the implementation of the Pre-re-TAS activity, the participants examined in depth and adopted the standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed to ensure the safety of all in the COVID-19 context. It was also an opportunity for them to be tested for COVID-19 prior to contact with the communities targeted by this survey. Finally, both surveyors and supervisors were trained on the pre-re-TAS data entry process into the Expanded Special Project for Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (ESPEN) platform.

- Training of coaches for the implementation of quality improvement activity

This was the first learning session of quality improvement (QI) coaches who will in turn train QI team members¹ at the periphery level of the health pyramid (sub-district and village levels) on the QI framework and multiple tools to establish the baseline performance and implement QI action plan in their respective sub-districts. The training session that gathered nine coaches² took place from September 30–October 2, 2020. At the end of the session, the coaches understood their role and were familiar with the tools to be used and how they should build and involve the QI teams to ensure success of the activity. They also came up with a detailed implementation plan (including variables they will be focusing on to improve situation and assess impact of QI activity) and detailed timeline of implementation. The QI activity will be implemented in the four districts (Quinhi, Zagnanado, Covè, and Za-Kpota) that failed TAS1 in FY18 in order to achieve high integrated MDA coverages and address data quality as well as supervision issues in a systematic way. Act | West project is supporting the PNLMT in the implementation and assessment of the QI activity.

¹ Composed of sub-district nurses, CDDs, village chiefs and local leaders.

² One head of departmental public health directorate, one physician head of district, 3 NTD focal points, one health zone statistician, one central level PNLMT staff, two FHI 360 staff.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TRAININGS ACHIEVED IN FY 2020 (APR–SEP 2020)

Training	Location	Target participants e.g., HCW, CDD, community	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g., FHI 360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Training for Pre-re-TAS in 4 districts	Bohicon	Lab technicians, Recorders, Supervisors	- Pre-re-TAS procedures - FTS use - EDC - Research ethics - SOP in the COVID-19 context	Sept 24–25	FHI 360	Participants acquired knowledge on Pre-re-TAS implementation procedures as well rules to follow during the activity implementation in the covid-19 context	16	2	18
Training of coaches for the implementation of quality improvement activity	Cotonou	NTD focal points, Doctors head of districts, Head of departmental Public Health directorate, PNLMT central staff, FHI 360 staff	- Description of coaches' role in the implementation of Quality improvement processes, - Present the quality improvement process including the model and steps that must be followed, - Key aspects of upcoming quality improvement sessions	Sept 30–Oct 2	FHI 360	Acquisition of knowledge of the QI process and tools, and came up with a detailed planning of how this tool will be implemented in their location (variables targeted for improvement, strategy, composition of QI teams, detailed planning of activity implementation in FY21)	6	3	9

Supervision for MDA

- Supervision of enhanced LF MDA

One staff member from the central level, three at regional level (one from the DDS, one from the departmental public health services, and one head of the Division of Epidemiology and Sanitary Surveillance), four district head doctors, 33 nurses, two health zone NTD focal points, and two FHI 360 staff have supervised the MDA until April 9. Central-level and FHI 360 staff supervised treatment for 6 days, through April 4. Most CDDs' teams visited followed the recommendation to prevent COVID-19

(social distancing, hands washing when they come in a household, drugs distribution using spoon or bottle cap, directly-observed treatment). The team took corrective actions when recommendations were not followed. The additional measures taken in terms of social mobilization were helpful in solving community's hesitation in participating in the MDA.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- LF Pre-re-TAS in four districts

Following the two-day training, the four teams of four persons engaged in data collection over three days in the 12 villages targeted (3 villages by district), testing eligible residents blood samples with Filariasis test kits (FTS). Two criteria were used to select those villages: 1) villages of residence of children going to schools where positive cases were found during TAS1 in FY18 and 2) villages with history of low coverage or not easily accessible during MDA campaigns. Pre-re-TAS data was collected from September 26–28 using the ESPEN data collection platform installed on smartphones. Though the target was 3,600, a total of 3,703 persons were surveyed and zero positive cases were recorded in any of the villages. Data analysis and report writing is in progress.

- TSS in four districts

Four districts that completed their impact survey in 2018 were planned to undergo trachoma surveillance survey (TSS) in FY20. Due to interruption of all community activities due to COVID-19, this survey was not implemented as planned in July 2020. By the end of FY20, USAID had not yet approved the implementation of this activity as part of the restart of NTD activities. Once a formal approval is received, the country will proceed with the assessment.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

- Supervision of LF Pre-re-TAS in four districts

The team of supervisors including central level teams (PNLMT and FHI 360 staff) provided technical and logistical support to the teams of surveyors including the effective application of SOPs to avoid exposure to and spreading of covid-19. There were neither incidents nor any suspected COVID-19 cases reported during the supervision. The rain, however, was a disruptive element in several places. However, every team was able to find ways to continue with data collection while respecting firmly the anti-covid-19 SOPs.

Dossier development

- Develop a complete preliminary version of LF elimination dossier

Act | West in collaboration with the PNLMT developed the terms of reference for a consultant to develop a preliminary version of the LF elimination dossier. Recruitment is ongoing as of the end of FY20. The consultant has been selected by a joint panel of Act | West and PNLMT staff, and a full draft of the elimination dossier will be developed during FY21 Q1.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

No STTA was engaged during the reporting period. As noted above, a consultant will be engaged beginning in October 2020 to develop the LF elimination dossier.

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

- HMIS – M&E Indicator Integration

The HMIS M&E Indicator Integration workshop was the second of a series of four workshops leading to completion of the process of NTD data management and integration in the DHIS2 platform with the technical support of the Direction de la Programmation et de la Prospective (Directorate of Programming and Foresight). The main objective was to develop tools for NTD data entry in the DHIS2 platform. At the end of the workshop, 250 data elements were created in the DHIS2 platform, and 22 NTD indicators were integrated in it (e.g., MDA coverage for both SCH/STH and OV/LF, LF Morbidity Management and Disease prevention (MMDP) data from number of patients identified and number that received care, number of trichiasis surgery cases, etc.). The next step (postponed to FY21) will consist of training NTD focal points for data entry into DHIS2.

Drug management

As neither SCH/STH MDA nor OV MDA have been implemented, none of the activities planned in this section have been implemented (drug dispatching and drug monitoring).

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES (IR2)

Develop NTD sustainability plan

The three³ remaining activities to complete the country's sustainability plan have been postponed to FY21 because of travel restrictions due to COVID-19 which prevented the Deloitte team from traveling. In July 2020, a contingency plan was developed, involving FHI 360 Cote d'Ivoire's team, but they were also unable to travel. As a result, all remaining HSS activities were postponed to FY21.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

No activity has been planned in this section.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

This cross-sector coordination activity was supposed to be implemented within the third steering committee meeting which has been cancelled.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

(Actions taken to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on program implementation)

At the time of outbreak (March 2020), the PNLMT was preparing to implement the LF MDA in four districts that failed their TAS1 in FY18. This activity could therefore not be cancelled, as it was crucial to maintain benefits of the previous LF enhanced MDA conducted since the failure of TAS1 in the area. For this reason, both training and social mobilization were adapted to the context to reassure communities on the safety of the drugs and that all measures were taken to avoid virus spreading. For example, CDDs were instructed to maintain physical distancing when possible whenever entering a household, wash their hands once they enter the household (all of them kept soap on them), and administer drugs with a spoon or bottle cap. In terms of social mobilization, all the messages were adapted to make a clear distinction between the ongoing campaign and COVID-19. In addition, the Red Cross volunteers were helpful in stopping the

³ Workshop to conduct sustainability self-guided assessment/cross sector barrier analysis, technical validation of the sustainability plan, political validation of the sustainability plan

spread of rumors the community because they were able to explain the purpose of the MDA campaign and clarify that the activity has nothing to do with COVID-19.

The second action to reduce COVID-19 impact was to hold virtual meetings/workshops that did not require attendance of participants residing out of Benin. During in-person meetings, all COVID-19 safety protocols were followed. Some of the meetings/workshops requiring attendance of international participants were held using video conferencing (via the Teams platform). Despite internet bandwidth issues, the PNLMT was able to complete the first MMDP situation analysis workshop with AIM Initiative and the training of QI coaches through this platform.

While community activities were put on hold, both PNLMT and FHI 360 worked on developing different SOPs for field activities (MDA, pre-re-TAS, TAS, TSS). The Act | West team worked closely with USAID to ensure optimal conditions for the safe re-start of activities in September 2020. The PNLMT therefore was able to conduct pre-re-TAS using the SOPs, and supervising teams ensured that all efforts thoroughly followed instructions.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 2: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS		
Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Rumors of COVID-19 spreading through LF MDA drugs, representing a threat to activity's success	Increased social mobilization through all possible means involving health personnel at both district and health zone levels, village chiefs, and local leaders, and Red Cross volunteers	Resolved
FHI 360 Benin bank account opened but is not functional, obliging activity funds to go through a third party	The contracts with the third-party agency concluded on September 30, 2020, and staff were hired by FHI 360 on October 1, 2020. The bank account will be fully functional once the Act West staff are transferred from the third-party hiring agency to FHI 360 (an activity that was pending FHI 360's full registration in Benin). In the interim, activities are paid through mobile money (including for example participant per diem and travel reimbursement) or directly through FHI 360's office in Cote d'Ivoire. This requires considerable effort to ensure funds are available in time for activities to start.	Pending

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 3: FY20 ACTIVITIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY21						
	O	Q1 N	D	J	Q2 F	M
Strategic Planning						
NTD Secretariat						
Building Advocacy for a Sustainable National NTD Program						
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
OV MDA in 51 districts			X			
SCH/STH MDA in 53 districts		X				
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities						
Field visit to collect information on ways to improve social mobilization for SCH/STH MDA in COVID-19 context	X					
Printing of banners for OV MDA in 48 districts		X				
Airing of MDA-related TV and radio commercials and announcements for OV MDA			X			
Community awareness-raising by town criers for OV MDA			X			
Printing of banners for SCH/STH in 53 districts	X					
Airing of MDA-related TV and radio commercials and announcements for SCH/STH MDA		X				
Community awareness-raising by town criers for SCH/STH MDA		X				
Training						
Training for TAS2 in 9 districts	X					
Training of nurses & CDDs for OV MDA		X				
Training of supervisors (CRPs, CPs, RUPs, and Co-RUPs) for SCH/STH MDA	X					
Training of CDDs for SCH/STH MDA		X				
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Drug and material dispatching for OV and SCH/STH MDA	X					
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision of OV MDA						
Supervision of SCH/STH MDA		X				
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS2 in 9 districts	X					
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of TAS2 in 9 districts	X					
Dossier Development						
Develop complete preliminary version of LF elimination dossier	X	X				
Data security and management						
HMIS – M&E indicator integration (Phase 1, workshop #3 and supervision of data entry)			X			
Drug Management						
Annual PC-NTD MDA drugs reverse logistics (OV and LF MDA)				X		
Develop NTD sustainability plan						
TIPAC Data financial gap analysis				X		
Workshop to conduct sustainability/self-guided assessment/cross sector barrier analysis				X		
SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance						
Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms						

TABLE 4: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
FAA#1 Meetings of OV/LF experts committee for elimination [1st national members only, 2nd national + international members] (FHI 360)						X
FAA#1 Steering committee meetings [coordination meetings gathering PNLMT, FHI 360, MOE, and actors from other sectors with impact on fight against NTDs] (FHI 360)			X			X
Technical assistance to develop of a national level MMDP strategic plan (AIM Initiative)		X				X
Support the development of a strategic plan to implement integrated or mainstreamed strategies to address morbidity burden in Benin (AIM Initiative)		X				X
Quality improvement learning sessions		X				X
NTD Secretariat						
FAA #3 Operational costs and supplies (FHI 360)	X	X	X	X	X	X
FAA #3 Vehicle maintenance (FHI 360)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advocacy						
Social Mobilization						
Training						
MDA training of regional trainers for all NTDs (FHI 360)				X		
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Workshop to fill in 2022 drug application forms (FHI 360)						X
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
Production of T-shirts for CDDs			X	X		
Procurement of dosing poles for OV MDA			X	X		
Supervision for MDA						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Dossier Development						
Conception of country's OV elimination strategy/plan (FHI 360)				X	X	X
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
Technical assistance to conceive country's OV elimination strategy/plan (local consultant)				X	X	X
Technical assistance to develop a brief describing implementation of NTD activities (MDA, DSAs, etc.) in Benin (local consultant)	X	X	X			
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Assessment of the need to strengthen the NTDP data security system (policies, protocols, alignment with MOH guidance) and identification of action steps to improve the current system (Deloitte in collaboration with MOH)	X	X	X			
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND HSS						
Governance Activities						
TIPAC update, medium term financial forecast and development of targeted budget advocacy materials (Deloitte)				X		
Development of Targeted Budget Advocacy Materials				X	X	X

TABLE 4: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Prioritized Functions						
FAA#1 HMIS – M&E Indicator Integration (Phase 1, workshop #3 and supervision of data entry) (FHI 360)	X			X		
FAA#1 HMIS – M&E Indicator Integration (Phase 2 & 3 of NTD data integration to the DHIS-2) (FHI 360)					X	
Advocacy						
FAA#1 Support the PNLMT to prepare Benin's contribution to World NTD Day including social mobilization activities (FHI 360)				X		
Other						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						
IR3: SCH, STH, SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES						
<i>Where integrated with IR1 activities, do not repeat here. Include them under the respective IR1 categories</i>						
Advocacy (IR3 only)						
Airing of MDA-related TV and radio announcements for school-based SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)						X
Community awareness-raising by town criers for SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)						X
Social Mobilization (IR3 only)						
Printing of posters and banners for SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts			X	X		
Printing of banners for SCH/STH in 53 districts	X					
Training (IR3 only)						
Training of supervisors (CRPs, CPs, RUPs, and Co-RUPs) for SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)					X	X
Briefing of CDDs for school-based SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)						X
Training of surveyors and supervisors for Impact assessment surveys post 5 years of MDA implementation in 8 districts (FHI 360)						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement (IR3 only)						
Drug transportation from central to regional level for SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)					X	X
MDA Coverage (IR3 only)						
SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)						X
Printing of reporting forms for SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)			X	X		
Supervision for MDA (IR3 only)						
Supervision of SCH/STH MDA in 48 districts (FHI 360)						X
Monitoring and Evaluation (IR3 only)						
Impact assessment surveys post 5 years of MDA implementation in 8 districts (FHI 360)						X
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs (IR3 only)						
Supervision of impact assessment surveys post 5 years of MDA implementation in 8 districts (FHI 360)						X
Short Term Technical Assistance (IR3 only)						



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FY20 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020- September 30, 2020

BURKINA FASO

Date: November 15, 2020

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of the Act to End NTDs | West Program, led by FHI 360 in partnership with Helen Keller International, Health and Development International, Deloitte, World Vision, Americares, and The AIM Initiative under Cooperative Agreement No. 7200AA18CA00011 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

2IE	International Institute of Water and Environmental Engineering (Institut International d'Ingénierie de l'Eau et de l'Environnement in French)
ALB	Albendazole
BCC	Behavior change communication
CDC	U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDD	Community drug distributor
CDTI	Community-directed treatment with ivermectin
CFA	Circulating filarial antigen
CS	Control (Spot-check) site
CSM	Community self-monitoring
CSPS	Center for Health and Social Promotion (Centre de Santé et de Promotion Sociale in French)
Dfid	Department for International Development
DGAP	General Directorate for Access to Health Products
DPSP	Directorate of Protection of Population Health (Direction de la Protection de la Santé de la Population in French)
DQA	Data quality assessment
DRS	Regional Health Directorate (Direction Régionale de la Santé in French)
DSA	Disease-specific assessment
EU	Evaluation unit
EPIRF	Epidemiological Data Reporting Form
FHI 360	Family Health International 360
FTS	Filariasis Test Strip
FY	Fiscal Year
HD	Health district
HKI	Helen Keller International
HSS	Health System Strengthening
ICP	Integrated communication plan
ICT	Immunochromatographic card test
INDB	Integrated NTD database
IEC	Information, education, and communication
IVM	Ivermectin
KAP	Knowledge, attitude, and practice
LF	Lymphatic filariasis
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDA	Mass drug administration
MMDP	Morbidity management and disability prevention
MOH	Ministry of Health
NTD	Neglected tropical diseases
NTDP	National Neglected Tropical Diseases Program (Programme National de lutte contre les Maladies Tropicales Négligées in French)
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC NTDs	Preventive chemotherapy NTDs
PNDS	National Health Development Plan (Plan National de Développement Sanitaire in French)
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SCM	Supply chain management
SAE	Severe adverse event
SS	Sentinel site
STH	Soil-transmitted helminths
TA	Technical assistance
TAS	Transmission assessment survey
TF	Trachomatous inflammation - follicular
TFGH	Task Force for Global Health
TIPAC	Tool for integrated planning and costing

TSS	Trachoma surveillance survey
TT	Trachomatous trichiasis
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID's Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | West program in Burkina Faso is managed by FHI 360 and implemented by Helen Keller International (Helen Keller) in Burkina Faso. This report covers the activities implemented during the second half of fiscal year 2020 (FY20), April 1 to September 30.

During this reporting period, activities were planned in consideration of the ongoing insecurity in the Nord, Centre-Nord, Est et Boucle du Mouhoun regions. However, many activities were delayed as a result of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The implementation of field activities was affected by measures put in place to prevent COVID-19 transmission by the Burkina Faso government, the World Health Organization (WHO) and USAID.

The first cases of COVID-19 in Burkina Faso were reported in March 2020. To respond to the pandemic, the government prepared a national response plan in March involving several government sectors (e.g., security, education, transport, communication, and health) and institutions (e.g., WHO and European Union) in an effort to slow transmission. Measures taken included the temporary closure of land and air borders, schools, markets, and places of worship; the quarantining of cities reporting cases; and a curfew for the entire country. In addition, the Ministry of Health (MOH) implemented prevention measures in the country, notably regular hand washing with soap and water, the use of hand sanitizer, mask-wearing, and social distancing of at least one meter between people. Act | West enforced physical distancing of at least two meters during activities.

Following a decrease in the number of new COVID-19 cases, the Burkina Faso government lifted its restrictions and permitted the MOH to restart activities in early June. However, Act | West activities were on hold until USAID approved MDAs and LF disease specific assessments (DSA) to restart in Burkina Faso on August 14, 2020. The USAID approval was based on the development of a restart plan and scope of practices (SOP) that ensured the safety of staff, CDDs, and beneficiaries. However, the MOH plans its activity calendar every two months and the NTDP needed to wait until the MOH updated its calendar to insert NTD activities. This resulted in NTD field activities not being able to start until after September 30, 2020. As a result, the main activities carried out during the reporting period were non-field-based activities such as capacity building and strategic planning. These activities were done with respect to COVID-19 prevention measures such as social distancing between participants (two meters in accordance with USAID guidelines), the wearing of masks, and the use of hand sanitizer before entering and leaving training rooms.

The following strategic planning activities were carried out:

- A coordination meeting with the National Program for the Prevention of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDP)
- Support to the NTDP for the development of a contingency plan for the implementation of activities to fight NTDs in the context of COVID-19
- Development of an implementation guide for field activities in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic
- Preparation of a document with support from the head office on the evolution of COVID-19 in the country and its impact on the "Domains to Consider Restarting NTD Activities"
- Support to the NTDP for the preparation of the FY21 workplan. The entire process was conducted virtually to prevent potential transmission of COVID-19

Preparation of the 2021-2025 NTD national strategic plan was scheduled for the period but was not conducted because the NTDP was awaiting the WHO's guidelines. In addition, the NTDP obtained and shared data from the FY 2019 MDA that had been delayed due to the health workers' strike.

The Act | West team additionally benefited from and organized several capacity building training sessions:

- Training on how to use the TIPAC tool. This was provided through four online sessions by Deloitte.
- Training on fixed amount awards (FAA) agreements for Act | West's central- and regional-level partners
- Training on the implementation of impact surveys for lymphatic filariasis treatment (pre-TAS), which was organized by the NTDP

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

There were no changes in staffing structure, new positions, or operational and management items during this reporting period.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

The following activities were carried out for strategic planning during the second half of FY20.

Coordination meeting with the NTDP, the unit heads and Act | West staff in Ouagadougou

The meeting was held on May 18, 2020 after the resumption of activities at the Ministry of Health and the other ministries, following a decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases starting in May. The meeting was held in Ouagadougou in compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and finalize the quality implementation indicators for the FY20 activities and determine additional protection measures required to restart field activities in the context of COVID-19, such as masks and hand sanitizer. During this meeting, it was decided that trainings would be held in two cities outside of Ouagadougou—Koudougou and Tenkodogo—which did not have active COVID-19 cases.

Support to the NTDP for the development of a contingency plan for the implementation of the activities to fight NTDs in the context of COVID-19

NTD MDA campaigns are primarily community-based actions that involve varying degrees of contact between providers and beneficiaries. To minimize COVID-19 contamination, special measures were taken to protect both providers and beneficiaries. An NTD contingency plan was developed that took into account COVID-19 preventive measures for the safe implementation of the activities in 2020. These measures include limiting meetings to 50 people or less, mandatory mask wearing for activity implementers and participants, social distancing of at least two meters (in accordance with USAID regulations), conducting surveys with no more than 50 people surveyed at the same time, using hand sanitizer or hand washing before and after entering homes or training rooms, sensitization on COVID-19 during activities, making the COVID-19 communication plan available at all levels, and taking temperatures during activities.

Creation of an implementation guide for field activities in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic

The primary objective of the Act | West implementation guide was to ensure the safe implementation of Act | West's activities in the context of COVID-19. It describes all measures that will be taken to ensure the safe implementation of the activities. These measures include those listed in the NTD Contingency Plan, as well as taking into account the health problems of Helen Keller staff during field visits and online training of all Act | West and Helen Keller staff on COVID-19.

Development of "Domains to Consider Restarting NTD Activities"

To facilitate discussion with USAID on the restart of Act | West program activities, Helen Keller – Burkina Faso, with support from Helen Keller – HQ, developed the "Domains to Consider Restarting NTD Activities" document in July. This document focused on the current situation of COVID-19 in Burkina, collected implementation plans across other health programs, and discussed the potential impacts on the implementation of MOH activities. Following discussions between FHI 360 and USAID, approval to restart Act | West activities in Burkina Faso was granted on August 14, 2020.

Development of FY21 workplan

Helen Keller – Burkina Faso staff coordinated with Helen Keller – HQ, NTDP, and FHI 360 to prepare the FY21 workplan, which comprised of the workplan narrative, budget, budget narrative and appendices. The preparation process, which was done online, began in June, and the workplan package was submitted to USAID on August 21, 2020 for review. USAID comments were received on September 22 and resubmitted to FHI 360 on September 29. Approval of the FY21 workplan is pending.

Submission of the FY21 JAP

A JAP file information workshop was held on March 25–27, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic in Burkina Faso, the workshop on filling out the joint drug request form for LF, OV, and SCH MDA was moved from Koudougou to Ouagadougou. Given the constraints resulting from the deadline for submitting the request to the WHO, this workshop involved a small number of NTDP members following preliminary work by the disease units. The NTDP submitted the completed drug request forms to WHO on April 2, 2020. The table below indicates the current status of drugs received by the NTDP. All drugs required for the FY20 MDAs have been received by the NTDP.

TABLE 1: STATUS OF DRUGS RECEIVED BY NTDP			
NAME	QUANTITIES EXPECTED	QUANTITIES DELIVERED AND RECEIVED	COMMENTS
IVM 3 MG CP (Ref: M-5401-2020)	5,402,500	5,402,500	Received Tuesday, September 22, 2020 Storage location: NTDP warehouse Donor: MDP
ALB 400 MG CP (ref PO: 202410920)	277,000	227,000	Received Tuesday, August 25, 2020 Storage location: NTDP warehouse Donor: WHO
PZQ 600 MG CP (ref: PZQ / 202410923)	7,510,000	7,510,000	Received Monday, August 10, 2020 Storage location: NTDP warehouse Donor: WHO
TT surgery equipment (Ref: POBKF212042)	20 KITS	20 KITS	Received Friday, August 28, 2020 Storage location: NTDP warehouse Donor: Sightsavers
FTS kit positive antigen check	5 bottles	5 bottles	Received Thursday, August 20, 2020 Storage location: NTDP warehouse Donor: WHO

NTD Secretariat

Helen Keller – Burkina Faso supported the NTDP through the procurement of communications and internet connection during the reporting period and the purchase of computer equipment, office supplies, and office equipment for the NTDP. The equipment was purchased to be used in the implementation of assessment surveys, to replace items that no longer work, or to provide equipment for new NTDP staff. Items purchased and the recipients are described in the table below.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF EQUIPMENT PURCHASED FOR THE NTDP			
Num	Item	Quantities	Recipient
01	Laptops	3	Monitoring and Evaluation Unit/NTDP
02	External hard drives	3	Monitoring and Evaluation Unit/NTDP
03	Printers	2	NTD Secretariat
04	Antivirus software	10	Monitoring and Evaluation Unit/NTDP
05	Scanner	2	NTD Secretariat
06	Internet connection keys	5	Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Trachoma Unit, and Communication Unit/NTDP
07	Tablets for data collection	10	Monitoring and Evaluation Unit/NTDP

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

No advocacy activities were carried out during this reporting period.

Mapping

The mapping of the NTDs supported the Act | West program has already been completed.

MDA coverage

No MDAs were carried out during the period. The FY20 SCH MDA, LF MDA, and OV/CDTI will be conducted in Q1 of FY21.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

During the second half of FY20, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the implementation of social mobilization activities, which are linked to the implementation of MDA campaigns. The social mobilization messaging for regional commercials and messages from community leaders will take into account aspects of COVID-19. The community distributors will also sensitize the communities during the administration of the drugs.

Training

The capacity building provided during the period was done online for the most part. The training/meetings were as follows:

Training of regional level representatives on fixed amount awards (FAA) agreements

This training was implemented in two sessions in accordance with guidelines set by the coordination meeting in May 2020. The first session was in Tenkodogo on September 24–25 and the second session was in Koudougou on September 28–29. The objectives of the training were as follows:

- Present the objectives and expected results of the Act | West program
- Present the characteristics of the FAA, its objectives and its requirements
- Present and explain the terms and conditions of FAA agreements
- Present and explain the different milestones and their application
- Discuss the shortcomings often found in FAA files with the DRS and the administrative and financial department heads.
- Explain the brand strategy and the Act | West program branding implementation plan.
- Make suggestions to improve FAA implementation.

There were a total 38 participants, including two women, consisting of the regional directors, the heads of the administrative and financial departments and the advance funds administrators. The presentations covered the agreements, the required supporting documents, and the branding of the Act | West program. In addition to the presentations, the attendees did practical exercises on requests and the supporting documents to be collected. The discussions during the training sessions covered certain aspects of the agreements that are not well understood, and the difficulties involved in gathering the supporting documents. For example, there were concerns on the information required in the pre-assignment questionnaire and certificate of completion appendices. These appendices were presented to participants to clarify the requirements and discuss the concerns. Following the training, participants better understood the FAA process and requirements.

Pre-TAS surveyor training

This training was held in Ouagadougou on July 9 at the Ministry of Health. It was organized by the NTDP in compliance with COVID-19 transmission prevention measures. The 14 laboratory technicians who participated in the training are from the NTDP and have had years of experience with the implementation of LF surveys. It covered the following points:

- Overview of the survey protocol
- Use of smartphones for electronic data collection
- Proper transportation, storage, and use of FTS
- The special measures required for the successful implementation of surveys in the context of COVID-19. The measures include the compulsory wearing of masks by all teams, compliance with social distancing rules, hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer.

The FY20 pre-TAS will be done in the first quarter of FY21 in three HDs (Tenkodogo, Bogodogo, and Fada N'gourma).

Quality improvement training

On June 22, 2020, the Act | West program team received orientation on the FHI 360 quality improvement model, provided by the Quality Implementation Lead of the Act | West program, with assistance from FHI 360. The tool, implemented by FHI 360, integrates quality improvement in its health programs by using fact-based models to achieve specific service quality objectives and strengthen the health system. The implementation of the tool was motivated by the need to test and validate the changes resulting from program implementation. Note that the orientation could not be held for the national NTD program due to a scheduling conflict and will be re-scheduled as soon as possible. In the event that the model is adopted by the national NTD program after the orientation session, it will be scheduled for gradual testing during the MDAs in Burkina's regions and health districts.

Training of Trainers (MOH funded)

Using MOH funds, the NTDP organized the first session of the LF/OV and SCH MDA training of trainers from July 6–8, 2020 in Tenkodogo. It brought together participants from the Centre-West, Centre, Centre-South, Centre-North and East regions. The second session was held from July 27–29 in Koudougou for stakeholders from the Cascades, Hauts Bassins, South-West, Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Est and North health regions. The training of trainers was held in two sessions to comply with COVID-19 preventive measures. Helen Keller – Burkina Faso staff were invited to these training sessions but did not participate due to the suspension of Act | West funds.

Webinars

- **A webinar on the examination and analysis of schistosomiasis data at the sub-district level to refine the praziquantel (PZQ) distribution map.**

This webinar was held on August 7, 2020. One of the recommendations of the second review of the strategy to prevent Schistosomiasis (SCH) and geohelminths held in May 2019 was to refine the national SCH mapping. This has not yet been done as the NTDP is waiting for the WHO to provide the mapping protocol. This activity still requires funding.

- **A webinar on how to use the ESPEN collect portal**

This webinar, which took place on August 26, 2020 covered how to use the ESPEN Collect portal for surveys and how to submit JAP files via the portal. Helen Keller – Burkina Faso and the NTDP are considering utilizing ESPEN Collect for future EDC.

Table 3: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY 2020 (Apr-Sept 2020)

Training	Location	Target participants (e.g. HCW, CDD, community)	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g. FHI360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Training on pre-TAS implementation	Ouaga	Surveyors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the protocol • Data collection methodology • Use of smartphones for EDC • Measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission during surveys 	July 9	Helen Keller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastering data collection steps in the field • Using smart phones for EDC • Mastering COVID-19 prevention measures 	12	2	14
TIPAC training	Online	Act West staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to TIPAC tool • Data entry using the tool • Data analysis • Report production 	May 28, June 11, June 25 and July 9	Deloitte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastering data entry and analysis, and report preparation 	2	1	3
FAA training	Tenkodogo Koudougou	Directorate-General of Public Health NTDP coordination Regional Directors Heads of the regional and central level administrative and financial departments Advance funds administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present FAA characteristics, goals and requirements; • Present and explain the terms and conditions of FAA agreements; • Discuss the shortcomings often found in the FAA files with the DRS and the administrative and financial department heads • Present the Act to End NTDs West program • Explain the brand strategy and Act to End NTDs West program branding 	Sept 24–25 Sept 28–29	Helen Keller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attendees received an introduction to the agreements and the supporting documents • Strategies for improved collection of supporting documents 	36	2	38

Supervision for MDA

There was no MDA supervision during this reporting period as no MDA campaigns were carried out.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

No M&E activities were implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FY20 MEL activities that remain to be implemented are:

- Trachoma surveillance surveys (TSS) for FY19 (2 HDs) and FY20 (5 HDs)
- LF surveys (pre-TAS (3 HDs), TAS1 (1 HD) and TAS2 (2 HDs)
- Data Quality Assessment (DQA) for the LF MDA in Sud-Ouest and Centre-Est regions
- Post-SCH MDA coverage and KAP surveys (2 HDs)
- Post-OV/CDTI coverage surveys (2 HDs)
- the implementation of the SCT tool during the LF MDA
- the community self-monitoring for OV/CDTI and the updating of the OV registers in 4 HDs in the Sud-Ouest region

The scheduling for TSS is pending approval from USAID on when trachoma surveys may resume. All other MEL activities are planned to be done in the first quarter of FY21.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

No supervision was done for this reporting period.

Dossier Development

The preparation of the first draft of the trachoma elimination dossier is under way internally at the NTDP. The trachoma dossier and lymphatic filariasis dossier workshops have been delayed until the first quarter of FY21.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

In September 2020, Helen Keller – Burkina Faso finalized the recruitment process for the landscape analysis consultant and the stakeholders for the intersectoral partnership and the sustainability of the NTDP in Burkina Faso. In total, two consulting firms and an independent consultant submitted offers. The selection committee chose the Bureau of Training, Management Education, Consulting, Social Marketing, and Audiovisual Production (BCS) to conduct the study, which will begin in October 2020.

The table below indicates the status of the technical assistance requested in FY20.

TABLE 4: SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE			
Scope of work (include only short summary)	Name of consultant/s	Period of consultancy	Status (completed, in-progress)
IR/S Team building meeting	Canceled	April 2020	Canceled per FHI 360
Cross-sector coordination landscape analysis (HKI consultant)	Dr. Pascal Korgo at BCS	September 2020	In progress
TA to conduct landscape analysis and sustainability self-assessment (Deloitte)	To be confirmed	November 2020	Not started

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

Data security procedures are in place at all data collection levels. Data managers are responsible for NTD data verification at the district, regional and national level.

Reception of FY19 MDA data

Helen Keller – Burkina Faso’s Country Director and Deputy Country Director held a meeting with the MOH General Director for Public Health on September 3, 2020 to discuss the missing FY19 MDA data. The FY 2019 transmission had been delayed due to the health workers’ strike. Helen Keller and the DGSP discussed the impacts of the missing data on the FAAs and alternative methods to obtaining or estimating the data. Following the meeting, Helen Keller’s case was prioritized by the MOH. The MOH managed to obtain the missing FY19 data and sent them to Helen Keller – Burkina Faso on September 8. The data were processed (data compilation, quality checks, and backup) and submitted to Helen Keller – HQ for review.

Drug management

No drug management activities were supported by Act | West during the reporting period.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES

Develop NTD sustainability plan

TIPAC training

These virtual trainings took place over four sessions on May 28, June 11, June 25, and July 9, 2020. The purpose of the training was to strengthen the Helen Keller staff to provide support to national programs implementing the TIPAC tool. These trainings were facilitated by Deloitte and FHI 360. The objectives of the training were as follows:

- To train Helen Keller and World Vision (WV) teams in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger on the TIPAC tool
- To teach the teams to enter and analyze TIPAC data
- To provide the WV and Helen Keller teams in these three countries with the skills necessary to assist the programs with updating the TIPAC and data analysis
- To define an activity implementation plan with each country team
- To identify support needed with each country team.

Following the meeting, Helen Keller – Burkina Faso mastered the TIPAC tool and better understood how to enter and analyze data. Helen Keller – Burkina Faso also defined a plan to support the NTDP in updating TIPAC and will continue to coordinate with the NTDP on the identified needed support. The teams trained from the three countries will serve as trainers during the next TIPAC sessions that will be in-person with the NTDPs with virtual support from Deloitte.

Landscape and Barrier Analysis

Helen Keller – Burkina Faso drafted a TOR to hire a consultant to conduct the interviews and write the Landscape Analysis final deliverable in July. The TOR was reviewed by Helen Keller – HQ and FHI in late-July. In August, the Helen Keller – Burkina Faso team posted the announcement for a consultant, who was recruited in September. The consultant started interviews in early October and the final report is aimed to be completed by the end of Q1.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

There were no activities in this field during this reporting period. The SCH MDA and post-SCH MDA coverage survey are planned for the first quarter of FY21.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

Meeting on the community health task force

On August 6, Helen Keller – Burkina Faso’s Deputy Country Director took part in the consensus workshop on the implementation of the community health task force to integrate the delivery of community health services. The meeting was organized by the Department for Health Promotion and Education and was attended by representatives of the MOH and technical and financial partners. The purpose of this community health task force was to ensure multi-sector coordination through decreasing overlaps in health interventions and strengthening coordination to optimize resource use. This platform will be integral in the implementation of the Sustainability Profile as it is a means to coordinate with other sectors to achieve sustainable NTD service delivery.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously handicapped the implementation of NTD activities. The measures taken by the government of Burkina Faso to stop the spread of COVID-19 and the USAID suspension of NTD prevention activities to avoid contributing to the spread of the pandemic have created significant delays. While the government allowed the ministries to restart their activities in early June, the NTDP had to wait until the end of August to obtain authorization from USAID to implement Act | West program activities. During the time activities were suspended, Helen Keller – HQ management requested Helen Keller – Burkina Faso to create a guide on implementing activities in the context of COVID-19 that highlights measures that will be taken to safely carry out NTD activities while ensuring the health of the participants and communities. In addition, the NTDP developed a contingency plan for restarting activities in the context of COVID-19.

As activities have restarted, these prevention measures have been updated in accordance with WHO and USAID guidance for use in the field:

- **For the MDAs:** Door-to-door distribution; social distancing of at least two meters; the wearing of masks by the community drug distributors (CDDs), supervisors, and community mobilizers; and consistent hand cleaning with hand sanitizer or water and soap before and after each contact.
- **For the surveys:** Surveys conducted done in waves of 50 participants to limit gathering size; social distancing of at least two meters in survey lines; wearing of masks by surveyors, supervisors, community mobilizers, and the people surveyed; search for and supervision of signs of COVID-19 among survey participants; and consistent hand cleaning with hand sanitizer or water and soap by all

A COVID-19 supervisor checklist proposed by the Act | West team and FHI 360 will be used to monitor the DSAs and MDAs to ensure full compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures. In addition, the Act | West team will provide USAID with videos and photos of the ongoing activities as evidence of compliance with safety protocols.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 5: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS		
Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Suspension of the implementation of Act West program activities by USAID due to the COVID-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the NTD contingency plan • Creation of a guide for the implementation of NTD prevention activities in the context of COVID-19 • Creation of the “Domains to Consider Restarting NTD Activities” in collaboration with Helen Keller – HQ • Inclusion of the lessons learned by the nutrition department during the implementation of the vitamin A supplement campaign in the context of COVID-19 	USAID approved Act West activities to restart in Burkina Faso on August 14, 2020
Implementation of field activities in the context of COVID-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the preventive measures of the Burkina Faso government in line with USAID directives. 	Ongoing

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 6: FY20 ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN FY21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
Elaboration of draft 0 of the 2021-2025 strategic plan						
Elaboration of draft 1 of the 2021-2025 strategic plan						
NTD Steering Committee Meeting						
NTD Technical Committee Meeting						
HKI and NTDP Coordination Meetings						
NTD Secretariat						
Communications and Internet Support to NTDP						
Building Advocacy for a Sustainable National NTD Program						
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
LF MDA in 5 HDs						
First round CDTI OV in 4 HDs						
MDA SCH 33 HDs						
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities						
Broadcast TV and radio spots for LF MDA						
Social mobilization with Leaders for LF MDA (regional level)						
Social mobilization with community leaders for LF MDA (HD level)						
Broadcast radio spots in HDs (LF MDA)						
Broadcast opinion leader audio recordings during in each HD (LF MDA)						

TABLE 6: FY20 ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN FY21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Film screening in LF villages (areas with low coverage, high refusal rate, and gold mining sites)						
CDTI HD advocacy meetings with local leaders (Dano and Diébougou HDs)						
Social Mobilization for CDTI (Dano and Diébougou HDs)						
Broadcast TV and radio spots at Central Level for SCH MDA						
Advocacy meeting with leaders in 7 regions (SCH MDA)						
Broadcast radio spots in 7 regions (SCH MDA)						
Broadcast opinion leader audio recordings at District Level (SCH MDA)						
Social mobilization with opinion leaders (SCH MDA)						
Broadcast radio spots SCH MDA						
Film screenings for SCH MDA (HD level)						
Town criers for SCH MDA						
Training						
Training of regional level HD and HC staff - LF/SCH MDA						
Training of district level staff - LF MDA						
Training of CSPS level staff - LF MDA						
CDTI Training						
CDTI Training - Dano and Diébougou HDs						
Training of District level staff - SCH MDA						
Training of CSPS Level Staff - SCH MDA						
Trachoma surveillance survey - training of surveyors (not yet approved by USAID)						
LF pre-TAS / TAS trainings						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Ensure the MDA Drug Supply to Regions						
Supervision for MDA						
Cascade supervision: regional, HD, CSPS, community level - LF MDA						
Cascade supervision: regional, HD, CSPS, community level - CDTI						
Cascade supervision: regional, HD, CSPS, community level - SCH MDA						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Re-pre-TAS in 3 HDs/7 sites (Bogodogo, Tenkodogo, Fada)						
TAS1 in 1 HD (1 EU) - Diébougou						
TAS2 in 12 HDs (1 EU) Pô						
Supervisor's Coverage Tool for LF MDA						
FY19 TSS in 2 HDs (2 EUs in one HD + 4 clusters in a second HD) (not yet approved for restart by USAID)						
FY20 TSS in 5 HDs (8 EUs) (not yet approved for restart by USAID)						
Update the OV CDTI registers in 4 HDs in Sud Ouest						
Post-CDTI OV coverage surveys in 2 HDs - Batié and Gaoua						
CDTI CSM in 4 HDs in Sud Ouest						
Annual Validation of MDA Data: National Level						
Annual Validation of MDA Data: Regional Level						
Annual Validation of MDA Data: HD level						
LF DQA in 2 regions (Sud-Ouest and Centre-Est)						
Post-SCH MDA coverage + KAP survey in 2 HDs						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of LF MDA						
Supervision of LF re-pre-TAS						

TABLE 6: FY20 ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN FY21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Supervision of LF TAS1						
Supervision of LF TAS2						
Supervision of TSS (not yet approved by USAID)						
Supervision of DQA						
Supervision of OV CDTI registers in the 4 endemic HDs in the Sud Ouest						
Supervision of post-CDTI OV coverage surveys (2 HDs)						
Supervision of CSM in 4 endemic OV HDs						
Supervision of the post-MDA SCH coverage survey in 2 HDs						
Development dossier						
Trachoma dossier workshop						
LF dossier workshop						
Data security and management						
Drug Management						
Develop NTD sustainability plan						
SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance						
Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms						

TABLE 7: FY21 PLANNED CTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
Helen Keller and NTDP Coordination Meetings (semi-annual technical committee meetings, 2 meetings)						
NTD Steering Committee Meeting (1 meetings supported by Act West and 1 meeting supported by other partners) (budgeted in FAA 1: DGSP)						
NTD Technical Committee Meeting (Quarterly meetings, 2 supported by Act West and 2 supported by other partners) (budgeted in FAA 1: DGSP)						
NTD Secretariat						
Support to NTDP for communication costs and supplies						
Advocacy						
Social Mobilization						
Celebration of World NTD Day						
Training						
MDA Training of Trainers at the central level						
TAS3 Training						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Drug transport from central to the regions						
Workshop to update the FY22 JAP for NTD Drugs						
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
Supervision for MDA						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS3 in 7 HDs (7 EUs)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of TAS3 in 7 HDs (7 EUs)						

TABLE 7: FY21 PLANNED CTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Dossier Development						
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Integrate NTD indicators and routine data collection into HMIS (HKI, no Act West cost)						
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND HSS						
Governance Activities						
Support the NTDP update the membership and mission of the NTDs steering committee to serve as an NTDs multi-sector coordination platform (HKI with support from FHI 360)						
TIPAC Data Entry Workshop - (HKI with TA from Deloitte)						
TIPAC Data Analysis & Budget Mapping Workshop - (HKI with TA from Deloitte)						
Sustainability Plan Dissemination Workshop based on the needs identified in the Sustainability Plan- (HKI)						
Refresher training of NTDP M&E Staff on the CIND						
Prioritized Functions						
Advocacy						
Targeted advocacy based on sustainability plan priorities (TA FHI 360 and Helen Keller)						
Advocacy for the inclusion of NTDs into the 2021-2025 National Health Sector Strategy and a sustainability objective into the revised NTD Master Plan (2021-2025) (Helen Keller/NTDP)						
Other						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						
IR3: SCH, STH, SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES						
Where integrated with IR1 activities, do not repeat here. Include them under the respective IR1 categories						
Advocacy (IR3 only)						
Social Mobilization (IR3 only)						
Training (IR3 only)						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement (IR3 only)						
MDA Coverage (IR3 only)						
Supervision for MDA (IR3 only)						
Monitoring and Evaluation (IR3 only)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs (IR3 only)						
Short Term Technical Assistance (IR3 only)						



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020-September 30, 2020

CAMEROON

Date: November 15, 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALB	Albendazole
APOC	African Program for Onchocerciasis Control
CAR	Central African Republic
CBTI	Community-Based Treatment with Ivermectin
CCU	Central Coordination Unit
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
CDTI	Community-Directed Treatment with Ivermectin
CRFiMT	Research Center on Filariasis and other Tropical Diseases (Centre de Recherche sur les Filarioses et autres Maladies Tropicales)
COSADI	District Health Committees (Comités de Santé des Districts)
COSA	Health Area Health Committees (Comités de Santé des Aire de Santé)
EU	Evaluation Unit
FTS	Filariasis Test Strips
FY	Fiscal Year
HD	Health District
HKI	Helen Keller International
ICT	Immunochromatographic
IEF	International Eye Foundation
IVM	Ivermectin
JRSM	Joint Request for Selected Medicines (for preventive chemotherapy)
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
MZB	Mebendazole
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MINCOM	Ministry of Communication
MINEDUB	Ministry of Primary Education
MINESEC	Ministry of Secondary Education
MMDP	Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention
MOH	Ministry of Public Health (MOH)
NCEOLF	National Committee for the Elimination of Onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis
NGDO	Non-governmental Development Organization (used to refer to IEF, PERSPECTIVE, and Sightsavers)
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
OSF	Ophthalmo Sans Frontières
OV	Onchocerca Volvulus
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PC	Preventative Chemotherapy
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PNLO	Programme National de Lutte contre l'Onchocercose (National Program for OV control)
PNLCé	Programme National de Lutte contre la Cécité (National Program for Blindness Control)
PNLSHI	Programme National de Lutte contre la Schistosomiase et les Helminthiases Intestinales (National Program for SCH and STH control)
RFHP	Regional Funds for Health Promotion
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SAFE	Surgery, Antibiotics Facial Cleanliness and Environmental Improvement
SAE	Serious Adverse Event
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SSI	Sightsavers International
STH	Soil Transmitted Helminths
TAP	Trachoma Action Plan
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TEO	Tetracycline Eye Ointment
TF	Trachomatous Inflammation, Follicular
TIS	Trachoma Impact Survey
TRA	Trachoma

TSS	Trachoma Surveillance Survey
TT	Trachomatous Trichiasis
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
ZTH	Zithromax®

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | West (Act | West) program in Cameroon faced significant impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period. Cameroon declared its first COVID-19 positive case on March 6, 2020. The National Program had been preparing to start the fiscal year 2020 (FY20) MDA training of health personnel at that time. Due to the increase of COVID-19 positive cases from March to April 2020, the government of Cameroon imposed protective measures, including prohibiting gatherings of more than fifty (50) people nationwide and encouraging remote work. In addition to the Cameroon government restrictions, the World Health Organization (WHO) released guidance on the implementation of NTD activities on April 1, 2020 that included suspension of field-based activities such as mass drug administration (MDA) and disease specific assessments (DSAs). At the direction of USAID, Act | West Cameroon paused all field-based activities in accordance with this guidance.

Helen Keller supported the Ministry of Health (MOH) in identifying activities that could proceed in light of the pause on field-based activities and sought alternative formats for conducting activities (e.g., remote meetings vs. in-person, limiting the number of participants for in-person meetings) to not lose progress on strategic planning and coordination on program objectives. Act | West provided financial support for a Zoom account for the MOH, which enabled the NTD program to hold meetings and workshops remotely.

With alternate formats and accommodations for non-field-based activities, the Cameroon program was able to complete several activities during the reporting period, including: the national annual meeting for the review/planning of NTD activities; FY21 Act | West work planning; a workshop to develop NTD indicators for performance-based financing (PBF); discussions with the PNLCé on trachoma program plans and development of action points with the PNLCé consultant; a meeting to validate the national strategic plan (2019–2023) for lymphatic filariasis morbidity and disability management; central and regional coordination meetings; and a national workshop to review NTD training modules. Progress was also made on LF elimination dossier development and a trachoma situational analysis of the seven regions of Cameroon that have not been mapped for trachoma.

The priority of Cameroon's MOH has consistently been to find a way to resume MDA and DSAs throughout the period of "pause" for field-based activities. As the COVID-19 situation in Cameroon was monitored, Helen Keller and Sightsavers provided technical assistance to the MOH to carry out risk assessments for implementing MDA and DSAs. Helen Keller also worked with the MOH to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for implementing NTD activities in the COVID-19 context. Upon review of the status of COVID-19 in Cameroon and the proposed risk mitigation measures for implementing MDA and DSAs, USAID approved the restart of NTD activities in Cameroon on August 13, 2020. Following this approval, Helen Keller supported the NTDP to mobilize to resume MDA and DSA activities using risk mitigation tools and the SOP for implementation in the COVID-19 context.

The majority of the FY20 MDA and DSA activities will carry over into the FY21 period of performance and will be implemented from October—December 2020. The country was able to finalize the protocol and start trainings for the TAS2 in 35 health districts (HDs) by the end of September. Preparations were also carried out for MDA in six out of ten regions targeted for onchocerciasis (OV) MDA: West, South, Littoral, East, Far North and Adamaoua. Drug delivery issues for ivermectin (IVM), Zithromax® and Tetracycline eye ointment (TEO) have hindered preparations and mobilization for OV MDA in the four remaining regions and the trachoma MDA in the two targeted districts in the Far North region.

Specifically, customs clearance processes have stalled the shipment/delivery of the IVM for several months, and the PNLO is waiting for approval from the Ministry of Finance to pay a requested forwarding fee that amounts to approximately US\$90 to get the shipment approved. Helen Keller has been coordinating between the PNLO and the Mectizan® Donation Program to aid in the process and provide guidance on the necessary steps. Additionally, there were challenges in responses from the PNLCé that stalled the procurement and shipment approval for Zithromax and TEO and delays in response time on questions on the order forms (e.g., country contact sheet, country shipment calculations and allocation tool, authorization to import the drugs, etc.). Helen Keller's country office provided communications support to help move the process forward. The approvals for these drugs have moved forward in the latter part of the reporting period, including FHI 360's approval for the TEO procurement package and ITI initiating the green light checklist process for the Zithromax delivery.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

Act | West provided internet connectivity support to the MOH (see NTD Secretariat) and Helen Keller – Cameroon staff for those working from home due to COVID-19 protective measures. The connectivity support enabled remote coordination, reporting, and monitoring of activities that were able to proceed while field-based work was on hold.

Act | West submitted a request approval for vehicle procurement in July 2020 for a vehicle that was included in the FY20 work plan. USAID approved the vehicle procurement in September 2020; however, by that time the exchange rate for the Cameroon Central African franc (CFA) had decreased and the USD amount approved for the vehicle was not sufficient to proceed with the purchase. Helen Keller submitted a memo requesting USAID approval for a vehicle purchased at a higher USD amount.

With the approval to restart MDA and DSAs falling towards the end of the fiscal year, the FY20 fixed-amount awards (FAAs) directly managed by Helen Keller were extended through December 2020 at no additional cost to enable the program to mobilize the restart of activities more easily. Helen Keller was able to manage cost-extensions within the FY20 budget to the International Eye Foundation (IEF) and PersPective to be able to implement OV MDA in the Adamaoua, South and Littoral regions. A no-cost extension was issued to Sightsavers to implement the OV MDA in the West region.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT O-GFT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

FY 2021 work planning process

Helen Keller and the MOH started the FY21 work planning process in June 2020. Through Zoom meetings and in-person discussions with other country NTDs stakeholders (IEF, Sightsavers, and PersPective), the FY21 priority activities list was submitted to FHI 360 and USAID. This activity list was developed based on the draft of Cameroon's 2020–2024 NTDs master plan and guidance provided in the FY21 USAID technical flags. The Helen Keller – Cameroon team coordinated with IEF, Sightsavers, and PersPective on their proposed support to NTD activities under Act | West throughout the development

of the work plan package. Helen Keller and FHI 360 arranged a meeting with the NTD Central Coordination Unit (CCU) of the MOH to discuss the quality improvement (QI) model developed by FHI 360 and the possibility of using this model for support to the Cameroon NTD program in FY21. The CCU agreed they would identify 10 coaches to lead the QI in six health districts (HD) from three regions as part of the pilot of this model: Center (three OV HD), Littoral (two OV HD) and Far North (one trachoma HD).

FHI 360, Helen Keller, and USAID held a Zoom meeting on July 15, 2020 to discuss outstanding items from the country FY21 list of priority activities, including the trachoma consultant, OV pre-stop MDA survey, purchase of laptops, coverage evaluation survey, and the SCH-STH impact surveys. Suggestions from this meeting were taken into account in the work plan. During the checkpoint meeting with USAID, there was also discussion about a workshop to understand the landscape of NTD program priorities, including domestic resource mobilization/advocacy coordination and cross-sector analysis, which could be co-implemented by Helen Keller, Deloitte, and World Vision, pending USAID approval. The work plan package was submitted to USAID at the end of August, and revisions were submitted in September.

Meeting to validate the national strategic plan (2019–2023) for LF morbidity management and disability prevention

Act | West provided technical and financial support to the MOH for the meeting to review and validate the national strategic plan (2019–2023) for LF morbidity management and disability prevention (MMDP). This activity, which took place from May 12–15, 2020, included participants from Helen Keller – Cameroon, IEF, PersPective, the PNLO, the World Health Organization (WHO) country office, Sightsavers, and the MOH NTDs CCU. Some of these participants attended in-person (within government regulations of fewer than 50 people), while others participated via Zoom. The MOH and partner NGOs subsequently held an in-person meetings from July 9-10, 2020 to finalize the national strategic plan (2019–2023) for LF MMDP. The final version is available upon request.

National Annual Meeting for the Review/Planning of NTDs activities

Act | West provided technical and financial support to the MOH to organize an in-person annual review/planning meeting on June 23-25, 2020 (while complying with government-mandated COVID-19 protective measures). Participants included the WHO, MOH central and regional levels, and partner NGOs, including Helen Keller – Cameroon. Participants reviewed the results of all FY19 NTDs activities implemented in the country, validated the FY19 OV MDA national database, and started to update the FY21 Joint Request for Selected Medicines (JRSM). Data were available for six out of nine regions that implemented OV MDA in FY19: North, Far North, North West, East, Center, and South West. The FY19 OV MDA data collection had not yet been implemented at that time in the other three regions: South, Littoral, and Adamaoua (the data collection for these regions will be completed by the end of October 2020). The meeting recommendations included the following:

- Regional Delegations of Public Health (RDPH) will continue to actively encourage more contributions from their communities to strengthen the resource mobilization efforts to support community drug distributors.
- The PNLCé and the PNLO will develop an integrated strategy to implement the TIS and TAS2 in the targeted health districts in the Far North region (planned for 2021). Meanwhile the MOH NTDs CCU and the RDPH for the Far North will continue to assess the security conditions in these districts and advise on potential impacts to programming.

Trachoma Program Strategic Planning Activities

On September 23, 2020, Helen Keller - Cameroon held a working session with the National Program for Blindness Control (PNLCé) and the CCU to discuss the status of FY 2020 planned trachoma activities. The meeting key outcomes were as follows:

- *Investigation in the Goulfey and Makary health districts in which trachoma prevalence was above 5% in the FY19 TSS:* Participants drafted the main points to include in the protocol including the questions, objectives, and the data sources to be used. The next step will be to finalize the review of the DSA tool developed by Act | West, which will help the National Program to finalize the investigation protocol. The PNLCé plans to complete this investigation before the start of the trachoma MDA.
- *Trachoma situational analysis:* Six of the seven targeted regions submitted their trachoma data. The CCU will liaise with the North West region to obtain the remaining data needed to complete the trachoma situational analysis.
- *Development of the National Transition Plan:* The trachoma consultant will finalize a transition plan template to be used by all relevant HDs. The PNLCé will schedule a meeting in October 2020 to consolidate the inputs from the HD level to draft the national plan.

NTD SECRETARIAT

Act | West provided support to the MOH to manage working from home and participation in remote meetings in light of COVID-19. To facilitate online coordination meetings of the local NTDs task force, Act | West provided the CCU with a five-month Zoom subscription. The CCU data manager was responsible for managing this Zoom account. Act | West also agreed to reimburse internet connectivity fees for each MOH staff attending the online meetings of the local NTDs task force.

Coordination with the CCU

Throughout the reporting period, there were a series of coordination meetings with the CCU that focused on how to respond to the COVID-19 situation and prepare to safely resume field-based NTD activities. The MOH's stance from the start of the pandemic was to not cease NTD activities. The below describes the sequence of discussions that were had among the MOH and NTD implementing partners. Ultimately, no MDA or DSA was implemented with Act | West funding until a solid risk mitigation plan and SOP for implementing these activities in the COVID-19 context were developed and approval was given by USAID to restart.

- The CCU held two online coordination meetings with all NTD implementing partners, including Helen Keller – Cameroon. The first meeting took place on April 8, 2020 and discussed the implementation of activities within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The CCU recommended that each NTD National Program, with assistance from the supporting NGOs, develop a three-month contingency plan (April–June 2020), taking into account the government's COVID-19 prevention measures. Each NTD National Program shared their respective contingency plans during the second coordination meeting held on April 15, 2020. These plans outlined three major resolutions:
 - The MOH postponed all DSAs to a later date.
 - The MOH postponed the routine MDA trainings in 9 out of 10 regions to later date.
 - The MOH maintained plans for the OV MDA campaign in the West region (which is managed by Sightsavers under their Act | West subaward). Partners and MOH staff

involved in the MDA activities in this region resolved to implement the campaign with respect to the COVID-19 measures listed by the local Government.

- The CCU held an online coordination meeting on May 19, 2020 with Helen Keller – Cameroon, SSI, IEF, and PersPective. During the meeting, the participants discussed OV MDA activities that could be implemented while observing COVID-19 safety protocols. Participants agreed that NGOs (Helen Keller – Cameroon, IEF, PersPective, and Sightsavers) should continue to provide technical assistance to the regions they are covering, to keep their regional MDA plans updated in the context of COVID-19.
- On May 27, 2020, the CCU presided over an online coordination meeting with Helen Keller – Cameroon and HQ, FHI 360, and other NGOs (IEF, PersPective, and Sightsavers). The meeting continued the discussion about the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the FY20 OV MDA campaign in Cameroon. As a major recommendation, the NGOs (Helen Keller, IEF, PersPective, and Sightsavers) agreed to provide technical assistance to the MOH to conduct a risk assessment to guide decision-making regarding MDA resumption and propose a plan for donor approval to start the MDA with risk mitigation measures. In August, on behalf of the MOH, Helen Keller submitted a case study of the COVID-19 situation in Cameroon, along with the proposed risk mitigation measures for restarting MDA and DSA activities, which was approved by USAID on August 13, 2020.
- Following USAID approval of restarting MDA and DSA activities, the National Program for Onchocerciasis Control (PNLO) held an in-person meeting on August 25, 2020 with the CCU, Helen Keller – Cameroon, International Eye Foundation, Sightsavers, and PersPective. The purpose was to prepare for the restart of MDAs or DSAs. Participants adjusted the program timeline. According to meeting recommendations, Helen Keller agreed to provide support to the PNLO to update the TAS2 protocol, budget, and forms to use for electronic data capture (EDC).

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

No advocacy meeting took place during the reporting period.

Mapping

No mapping was completed during the reporting period.

MDA coverage

LF

Cameroon has met criteria to stop LF MDA in 136/137 HDs. The remaining HD (Akwaya) has not yet conducted the TAS1 because of ongoing insecurity. This survey is planned for FY21 with Act | West support.

Trachoma

In FY20, the country planned to restart trachoma MDA in two HDs (Goulfey and Makary) in the Far North Region, as the TSS results from 2019 showed 6.9% and 10.01% TF prevalence, respectively. Act | West will provide financial and technical support to conduct the trachoma MDA, which was postponed to November 2020 due to COVID-19 and because the Zithromax and TEO are not yet in country.

OV

Act | West provided technical and financial support to the Adamaoua and the South regions to complete the FY19 MDA data collection in September. Results will be available in October 2020. The OV MDA in all ten targeted regions is now scheduled for October–November 2020 following the approval of USAID to restart MDA activities. The MDA is being operationalized with the inclusion of the SOP for implementing MDA in the COVID-19 context and supervisor’s checklist for COVID-19

SCH-STH

The Act | West Program is not supporting SCH-STH MDA in FY20. The MOH is carrying out this activity with technical and financial support from other donors (such as Sightsavers and WHO). The tentative period for the SCH-STH MDA is October–November 2020.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

In preparation for the FY20 MDA campaign, Helen Keller – Cameroon printed 21,000 posters and produced 14 roll-up banners and 2,000 smocks in April 2020. These IEC materials are for the six HKI-managed regions: Center, East, North, Far North, North West, and South West. Helen Keller – Cameroon shipped the IEC materials to the regions, where they have been stored in the regional warehouses pending the start of the MDA campaign.

Training

Trainings for the MDA have been rescheduled to October 2020. The trainings will include COVID-19 prevention measures and will orient participants to the supervisor’s checklist the SOP for implementing MDA in the COVID-19 context.

National workshop to review NTD training modules for district and health areas staff

Act | West provided technical and financial support to the MOH for the workshop to review the NTDs training modules for health staff responsible for conducting MDA training activities, while respecting COVID-19 prevention measures. The first part of the workshop was conducted as an online preparatory meeting on April 21, 2020. The meeting was presided over by the CCU and included 34 participants representing the PNLO, the WHO country office, the Research Center on Filariasis and other Tropical Diseases (CRFiLMT), and NGO partners (Helen Keller, IEF, Sightsavers, PersPective). The main outcomes from this meeting were as follows:

- The CCU set up working groups of 10 people or fewer to review/revise different sections of the training modules: Group 1 focused on OV and LF; Group 2 focused on trachoma; Group 3 focused on SCH and STH; and Group 4 focused on data management.
- During the group work, participants were tasked to revise the following chapters from the current version of the training modules: drug and data management; management of serious side effects; and what is expected from the central level to community level NTD stakeholders.
- During the group work, participants were asked to include chapters focusing on the LF and trachoma monitoring and evaluation stage, as well as LF morbidity management.

The second part of the workshop focused on group work and was carried out from April 27–30, 2020. The goals for group work (outlined above) were completed. As a third part of the workshop, the MOH and NGO partners held an in-person meeting from July 6–8, 2020 to finalize the review of the NTDs integrated training modules. The draft document is available.

Supervision for MDA

Aside from supervision of the FY19 data collection by IEF in the Adamaoua and South regions, no supervision for MDA activities took place during the reporting period. The FY20 MDA is planned for the October–December 2020 period. Prior to each campaign, supervisors will be oriented to the supervisor’s checklist and SOP for implementing MDA in the COVID-19 checklist.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

TAS2 in 13 Evaluation Units in 35 HDs in the East, Littoral, South and West Regions and in Mada HD

Helen Keller – Cameroon and the National Program for Onchocerciasis Control (PNLO) developed the forms that surveyors will use on smartphones for electronic data capture (EDC) via the Ona platform. The TAS2 protocol was reviewed and validated by Helen Keller and FHI 360. Since the MOH postponed the TAS2 due to COVID-19, Helen Keller – Cameroon and the PNLO revised survey budgets to include costs related to COVID-19 prevention measures, such as hydro-alcoholic solutions, bleach, and handwashing devices. They also developed sensitization messages that community mobilizers will relay two weeks before field data collection. In September 2020, Helen Keller – Cameroon and the CRFILMT facilitated a national-level refresher training targeting eight national supervisors and the 13 recorders who will use the smartphones during the field data collection scheduled for October 2020.

Trachoma situational analysis in 3 out of 10 regions

Helen Keller – Cameroon provided support to the MOH to start the trachoma pre-mapping desk review to determine whether trachoma is suspected in areas of the country that have not been mapped. The PNLCé National Coordinator presided over an in-person meeting from June 11–12, 2020 in Yaoundé to discuss the March 2020 Dakar workshop supported by Act | West (see SAR1 for details). Participants were from the MOH NTDs CCU, Helen Keller – Cameroon, Sightsavers, International Eye Foundation, and the trachoma regional focal points from the seven regions targeted for the trachoma desk review. Participants reviewed existing data collection tools and planned the different steps required to carry out the desk review. Key recommendations from this meeting included:

- The trachoma regional focal points should collect and submit to the PNLCé information on demography; eye health facilities; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).
- The PNLCé, with technical assistance from Helen Keller – Cameroon, will use these data to finalize the work methodology and the timeline of the trachoma desk review.

Following the June meeting recommendations, the NTD regional focal points of the seven regions targeted for the trachoma desk review shared with the National Program the baseline information on HD-level demography; eye health facilities; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Helen Keller-Cameroon and the PNLCé trachoma consultant started to provide technical support for the analysis of these data. This will help to finalize the desk review methodology as well as its timeline and overall budget. The work on the situational analysis will continue into the October–December 2020 period.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

No supervision for M&E and DSAs took place during the reporting period. Supervision of the TAS2 is planned for October 2020. Prior to supervising the DSA, supervisors will be oriented to the supervisor’s checklist and SOP for conducting DSAs in the COVID-19 context.

Dossier Development

The PNLO organized a Zoom meeting on June 18, 2020 to assess the implementation of recommendations from the first LF elimination dossier development workshop held in February 2020.

Attendees were from the Center for Research on Filariasis and other Tropical Diseases (CRFILMT), the PNLO, Helen Keller – Cameroon, International Eye Foundation (IEF), PersPective, the MOH CCU, and Sightsavers. Discussions revealed that nearly 70% of the requested documents/data are already available. The following documents were missing:

- ESPEN Reports indicating the LF endemicity in the neighboring countries (the CCU data manager agreed to contact the WHO country office to sort this out—he will also utilize the ESPEN website)
- Data about vector control, especially regarding the mass distribution of bed nets (the PNLO coordinator agreed to contact the National Coordinator of the Malaria National Program to get these data).
- Security reports highlighting population migrations, conflicts, and hard-to-reach communities (PersPective and the CCU agreed to continue the follow-up with the Ministry of Territorial Administration)

A working group comprised of staff from the CCU and Helen Keller – Cameroon was created to define guidelines for the collection of existing documentation to update the LF dossier.

The PNLO also organized an in-person meeting on July 17, 2020 related to the LF elimination dossier development. Attendees were from the Center for Research on Filariasis and other Tropical Diseases (CRFILMT), the PNLO, Helen Keller – Cameroon, International Eye Foundation (IEF), the CCU, and Sightsavers. This goal of this meeting was to compile all available LF documents, including the demographic reports of endemic HDs, LF baseline prevalence, LF MDA data from 2008–2019, pre-TAS and TAS data from 2013–2020, LF entomological survey reports and publications, the LF MMDP data, and the 2019–2023 national MMDP plan. A small working group comprised of the PNLO, CCU, IEF, and Helen Keller will start preparing the dossier narrative using these documents.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

TABLE 1: SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Scope of work (include only short summary)	Name of consultant/s	Period of consultancy	Status (completed, in-progress)
Planning and organization of trachoma-related activities	Dr. Noa Blaise	June 1–December 31, 2020	In-progress

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

Support to the MOH for the mainstreaming of NTD data into the national database

- The CCU conducted a Zoom meeting on June 2, 2020 to assess the progress made in adding NTD indicators into the District Health Information System (DHIS2). The meeting brought together all the NTD National Programs and supporting NGOs including Helen Keller – Cameroon. Participants reviewed the indicators presented by each National Program and agreed that the CCU will finalize the list of key indicators and submit it to the Health Information Management Unit.

- The CCU organized an in-person meeting on July 28–30, 2020 to validate the NTD indicators to include in the DHIS2. The participants included staff from PNLO, PNLCé, National Program for the Control of Schistosomiasis and Soil-transmitted helminthiasis (PNLSHI), the Health Information Management Unit (HIMU), and supporting NGOs including Helen Keller – Cameroon. Participants reviewed and finalized the indicators for each NTD National Program. As a next step, data managers for each NTD program in collaboration with the HIMU agreed to develop data collection forms. The CCU will monitor the data collection phase through a pilot project targeting a sample of HDs in the West, East, Adamaoua, and Littoral regions. The Act | West FY21 WP also includes DHIS2 training sessions targeting district teams.

Drug management

Financial support to PNLO for the transport of Mectizan® and FTS from the point of entry (port or airport) to the National Purchasing Center for Essential Drugs and Products (CENAME)

The lockdown of country borders due to COVID-19 and the lengthy customs duty exemption procedure for Mectizan® delayed the arrival of IVM in Cameroon. There was a lot of back-and-forth between Mectizan® Donation Program (MDP), the WHO country office, and the MOH about the IVM customs fees. On July 24, 2020 Helen Keller - Cameroon attended a meeting with the PNLO and WHO country office about clearing the FY20 Mectizan® shipment. Dr. Yao Sodahlon from the MDP agreed that MDP will pay for the drug clearance fees this year. Participants also agreed that the PNLO coordinator should organize a meeting during FY21 to bring together all the NTDs stakeholders in order to define solutions to the recurrent Mectizan® clearing issues.

To help resolve the issue, MDP updated the shipping documents by adding the following information about the drugs: *“NOT FOR COMMERCIAL SALE – FREE MEDICATION FOR THE TREATMENT OF ONCHOCERCIASIS – NOT SUBJECT TO CUSTOMS DUTIES – DONATION APPROVED AND ENDORSED BY MINISTER OF HEALTH.”* In addition, on August 11, 2020 the CCU submitted a letter to the Minister of Health requesting him to reach out to the Minister of Finance to order customs services to apply a XAF 50,000 (approx. \$90) forwarding fee for IVM packages. The purpose of this process was to decrease the fees due to the freight forwarder as much as possible. MDP agreed to send the drugs to country when this process is completed. Helen Keller has actively followed up with the PNLO, MDP, and WHO to clarify steps in the process, facilitate communications, and ensure that follow-up was happening between all parties. There are activities planned under the FY21 work plan to address the issues faced in the drug order and delivery process. Act | West will provide financial support to the PNLO for the transportation of IVM from the Yaoundé airport to the National Purchasing Center for Essential Drugs and Products (CENAME) once the process is completed.

Zithromax® and Tetracycline eye ointment procurement

There were significant delays in the procurement of Zithromax and TEO during the reporting period, largely due to communications challenges with the PNLCé; however, towards the end of the reporting period progress was made on getting the drugs shipped to Cameroon. The PNLCé submitted to International Trachoma Initiative (ITI) the complementary documents requested for the shipment of the FY20 Zithromax order to cover the two health districts (Makary and Goulfey) targeted for trachoma MDA in the Far North region. The expected delivery period in Cameroon is October 2020. Additionally, Helen Keller - Cameroon is working with the MOH to get the TEO importation clearance, following the approved procurement of the drug. Helen Keller – Cameroon is working with the PNLCé to improve response time and clarity of responses and what is required to approve drug orders/shipments on future drug procurements.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES

Develop NTD sustainability plan

Workshop to develop NTD indicators for the national performance-based financing system

Act | West provided support to the CCU to organize a workshop from September 16–18, 2020 to develop NTD indicators for the performance-based financing (PBF) mechanism implemented by the Ministry of Health with World Bank support. Helen Keller – HQ, FHI 360, and National PBF technical unit provided inputs for the preparation of the workshop.

Participants of the workshop included the CCU, National PBF Technical Unit, PBF Contract Development & Verification Agency for the East region, City Councils Associations, National NTDs programmes, Helen Keller, supporting NGOs, RDPH, and health district level. In addition, staff from Helen Keller - Global and FHI 360 participated virtually. During the workshop, participants developed a draft list of NTD indicators to use in the PBF system for the central, regional, district, and community levels. As a next step, the National PBF Technical Unit will review and finalize the list of indicators. The first level of integration of the final indicators will concern additional funding in four regions. The second level will concern the initial Health System Performance Reinforcement Project (HSPRP) and will be done during another national workshop with the goal of finalizing the NTD PBF indicators and discussing the sustainability of the national program.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

From August 3–7, 2020, Helen Keller - Cameroon participated in an in-person meeting to finalize and validate the 2021–2030 roadmap for the fight against Schistosomiasis (SCH) and Soil Transmitted Helminthiasis (STH) and to validate the 2020 PNLSHI action plan in the context of COVID-19. Participants also included personnel from NGOs (Sightsavers, PersPective, International Eye Foundation, Good Neighbors). Discussions and presentations highlighted the following key interventions the PNLSHI would like to focus on: expanding access to treatment; completing precision mapping; strengthening health operational capacities; intensifying multi-sectorial action; strengthening resource mobilization; improving monitoring and evaluation; and encouraging country and community ownership.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

Helen Keller – Cameroon staff (based in the sub-office in the Far North) attended a regional coordination meeting of the Far North region on April 23, 2020, presided over by the Regional Delegate of Public Health. Other participants included WHO – Cameroon, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) country office, and the Red Cross country office. The purpose was to discuss measures to fight against epidemics and pandemics locally. As a primary outcome, participants agreed that the NGO partners should integrate COVID-19 sensitization into their routine activities and provide support to the training of community health workers to improve COVID-19 sensitization at the community level.

COMMUNICATIONS

In the North region in April, field-based Helen Keller – Cameroon staff provided support to the RDPH in COVID-19 communications. They worked with the regional communications focal point and the NTDs focal point to develop the key sensitization messages on COVID-19 in French and local languages to be disseminated in the six OV-endemic health districts.

In the Far North region, field-based Helen Keller – Cameroon staff attended a meeting on May 5, 2020 (at no cost, only LOE) with the RDPH and other organizations including UNFPA, WHO and Plan

International. Discussions were aimed at improving the sensitization messages about COVID-19. Participants agreed that the RDPH should involve community drug distributors in the dissemination of these health messages.

Alongside the process of preparation of the FY21 work plan, the MOH and Helen Keller - Cameroon took into account communications and knowledge management and proposed a set of activities that will galvanize the visibility of NTDs through media presence and targeting a wide audience, including participation in World NTDs Day.

In August 2020, with the restart of MDA and DSA activities, the country started developing a plan to document the implementation of these activities utilizing COVID-19 preventive measures, including:

- Sharing of more videos and photos from the field not only to ascertain the effectiveness of activities, but also as means to monitor the compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures;
- Collecting and sharing success stories.

Social media

In April 2020, as part of World Malaria Day and Safety and Health at Work, the Helen Keller – Cameroon Communications Officer shared the following Twitter posts promoting NTDs work:

- <https://twitter.com/EgbeBertilleObi/status/1255129298014400514?s=20>
- <https://twitter.com/EgbeBertilleObi/status/1254149699038314497?s=20>
- <https://twitter.com/EgbeBertilleObi/status/1270662450187296769?s=20>
- Tweet Analytics:
 - Impressions (times people saw this Tweet on Twitter): 347
 - Engagements (times people interacted with this Tweet): 25
 - Media engagements (number of clicks on your media counted across videos, vines, gifs, and images): 14
 - Likes (times people liked this Tweet): 6

From September 16-18, communications staff were active on social media during the workshop to develop NTDs indicators for the performance-based financing (PBF) mechanism:



IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

As noted earlier in the report, field-based NTD activities were paused from the start of the reporting period until August. During that period, extensive efforts were undertaken to assess the COVID-19 situation in Cameroon and develop contingency plans for program implementation, particularly since the MOH was adamant about not ceasing NTD activities (see NTD Secretariat section on those discussions). The program was able to maintain progress of strategic planning initiatives during the period through the use of remote platforms and limited in-person meetings. With the remote format, these activities were more spread out, e.g., the FY21 work planning process extended beyond the typical three-day workshop.

In the bid to prepare to resume MDA and DSAs in the context of COVID-19, the MOH and Helen Keller developed risk mitigation plans to help guide plans for the NTD activities. In May 2020, Helen Keller – Cameroon conducted a situational analysis of the use of local personnel protective equipment (PPE) and a detailed COVID-19 protective measures budget for implementing MDA, which was submitted to FHI 360. The budget included costs related to the increased number of training sessions (to respect social distancing), additional supervision days, and soap for handwashing during meetings and trainings.

In June 2020, Helen Keller – Cameroon and Sightsavers provided technical assistance to the MOH to carry out an MDA risk assessment in the West region, using the *WHO Treatment Distribution Risk Assessment and Mitigation Action Tool* in the context of COVID-19. The country relied on lessons learned from this pilot experience to extend the implementation of this tool in the nine other regions to determine when MDA field activities could safely start during the COVID-19 pandemic. The country also carried out the survey developed by Helen Keller that covers further domains critical to seeking donor approval to restart field-based activities.

In September 2020, Helen Keller – Cameroon and the CCU developed standard operational procedures (SOPs) to use in the COVID-19 context. These SOPs provide operational guidance in the context of COVID-19 pandemic on measures to follow (in conducting MDAs and DSA) by everyone including health personnel (from the central, regional, health district and health area levels), CDDs, laboratory technicians, community members, and NGO partners staff from Helen Keller International, International Eye Foundation (IEF), PersPective, and Sightsavers. Helen Keller also created supervisor’s checklists to follow during MDA and DSAs, which were disseminated to the Act | West Cameroon country program. These documents have been shared with FHI 360 and USAID.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 2: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS		
Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Closure of country borders due to COVID-19 and the lengthy customs duty exemption procedure for Mectizan® delayed the arrival of IVM in Cameroon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MDP updated the Mectizan® shipping documents by adding the following information about the drugs: <i>“NOT FOR COMMERCIAL SALE – FREE MEDICATION FOR THE TREATMENT OF ONCHOCERCIASIS – NOT SUBJECT TO CUSTOMS DUTIES – DONATION APPROVED AND ENDORSED BY MINISTER OF HEALTH.”</i> - The CCU submitted a note to the Minister of Health to reach out to the Minister of Finances so that he instructs the customs services to apply a XAF 50,000 (approx. \$90) forwarding fee to the whole IVM packages. Feedback is awaited. 	Pending
Delay of the MDA campaign due to the late arrival of IVM	Helen Keller - Cameroon assisted the PNLO to analyse and reallocate the FY19 remaining Ivermectin stock to six regions (West, East, Littoral, South, Far North, and Adamaoua), which are now ready to start the MDA campaign	Partially Resolved: four regions are still pending drug arrival (see above challenge)
Difficulties in holding coordination meetings when the COVID-19 started and working from home was encouraged	To facilitate online coordination meetings of the local NTDs task force, Act West provided the CCU with a six-month Zoom subscription. The CCU data manager was responsible for managing this Zoom account. Act West also agreed to reimburse internet connectivity fees to each MOH staff attending the online meetings of the local NTDs task force	Resolved

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 3: FY 2020 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 2021						
	O	Q1 N	D	J	Q2 F	M
Strategic Planning						
Regional annual review planning meeting in 10/10 regions			X			
Support to the PNLCé to validate the strategic plan for the elimination of trachoma 2020-2025			X			
Workshop to review TSS Results			X			
NTD Secretariat						
Building Advocacy for a Sustainable National NTD Program						
Regional advocacy meeting in the Littoral region to improve local fundraising for NTDs program	X					
Regional advocacy meeting in the West region to improve local fundraising for NTDs program		X				
NTDs Documentary		X	X			
Mapping						
Trachoma desk review			X			
MDA Coverage						
OV MDA in 113 HDs		X	X			
Trachoma MDA in two HDs		X	X			
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities						
Training						
MDA Training of health personnel on community-based MDA campaign	X	X				
MDA Training of CDDs on community-based MDA campaign		X				
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Transport of Ivermectin, TEO, and Zithromax®		X				
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision of the MDA Trainings of health personnel on community-based MDA campaign	X	X				
Supervision of the MDA Trainings of CDDs on community-based MDA campaign		X				
Supervision of the drug distribution		X	X			
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS2 (field data collection) in 13 EU (including Mada HD)	X					
Trachoma Impact Survey in the Kolofata HD and Mora IDP camp			X			
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of TAS2 (field data collection) in 13 EU (including Mada HD)	X					
Supervision of Trachoma Impact Survey in the Kolofata HD and Mora IDP camp			X			
Dossier Development						
Data security and management						
Drug Management						
Develop NTD sustainability plan						

TABLE 3: FY 2020 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 2021						
	O	Q1 N	D	J	Q2 F	M
SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance						
Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms						

TABLE 4: FY 2021 ACTIVITIES						
	O	Q1 N	D	J	Q2 F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
Regional annual meeting for the review/planning of FY 2020 NTDs activities			X			
National annual review planning meeting of the FY 2021 NTDs activities				X		
Validation meeting of the strategic plan of OV elimination		X				
NTD Secretariat						
Purchase of three laptops			X			
Meetings with the NTD Technical Steering Committee				X		
Advocacy						
Social Mobilization						
Sensitization at district level for the community-based OV and trachoma MDA (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and From FAA#13 to FAA16)						X
National workshop to prepare the 2021 NTDs World Day		X				
Celebration of the 2021 NTDs World Day				X		
Production of IEC materials			X	X		
Training						
Regional training of district management teams of the East region and BANKIM HD on the SAE management (FAA#1 and FAA#15)					X	
Training of health personnel in the 113 OV HDs and 1 trachoma HD for the FY 2021 MDA campaign (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and From FAA#13 to FAA16)					X	
Training of community drug distributors in the 113 OV HDs and 1 trachoma HD for the FY 2021 MDA campaign (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and From FAA#13 to FAA16)					X	X
TASs refresher training at the central level					X	
Quality Improvement (QI) in six health districts with low MDA coverage rate and/or failed to TSS				X		
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Transport of Ivermectin for the FY 2021 MDA campaign						X
Purchase of TEO for trachoma FY 2021 MDA campaign						X
Clearing of FTS from port and transportation to program stores			X			
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
MDA Supplies (printing of community treatment registers for the FY 2021 OV MDA campaign)				X		
Supervision for MDA						
Annual community data collection and review in the villages of the HDs endemic to OV and trachoma for the FY 2020 MDA	X					

TABLE 4: FY 2021 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Annual Meetings (at the HDs level) about the analysis of the data collected during FY 2020 MDA campaign		X				
Supervision of the trainings of health personnel in the 113 OV HDs and 1 trachoma HD for the FY 2021 MDA campaign (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and From FAA#13 to FAA16)					X	
Supervision of the trainings of community drug distributors in the 113 OV HDs and 1 trachoma HD for the FY 2021 MDA campaign (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and From FAA#13 to FAA16)					X	X
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS1 in Akwaya HD in the South West region					X	X
TAS-2 in 33 HDs of North West and South West regions					X	X
TAS-2 in 11 HDs of Adamaoua, Centre and East regions					X	X
TAS2 in Kolofata HD in the Far-North					X	X
TAS-3 in 38 HDs of Far-North and North region					X	X
OV epidemiological pre-stop MDA survey in the Far-North and the North regions					X	X
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of TAS1 in Akwaya HD in the South West region					X	X
Supervision of TAS-2 in 33 HDs of North West and South West regions					X	X
Supervision of TAS-2 in 11 HDs of Adamaoua, Centre, and East regions					X	X
Supervision of TAS2 in Kolofata HD in the Far-North					X	X
Supervision of TAS3 in 38 HDs of Far North and North region					X	X
Supervision of OV epidemiological pre-stop MDA survey in the Far North and the North regions					X	X
Dossier Development						
Two meetings for the trachoma elimination dossier (FAA#7)					X	
Two meetings for the LF elimination dossier (FAA#7)					X	
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
Support a temporary consultant at the PNL Cé	X	X	X	X	X	X
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Regional workshops on the NTDs data processing in the DHIS2 (HKI)					X	
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
National workshop for the NTDs drug management (HKI)				X		
Regional training of district management teams on the NTDs drug management (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and From FAA#13 to FAA16)					X	
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND HSS						
Governance Activities						
Workshop to assess NTD Program priorities including domestic resource mobilization/advocacy coordination and cross-sector analysis to develop a plan for strategic implementation of future sustainability and systems strengthening activities (HKI/Deloitte)			X			
Prioritized Functions						

TABLE 4: FY 2021 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Meetings in 20 HDs (2 HD per region) with community representatives to strengthen their participation in the NTDs Program (HKI) - (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and from FAA#13 to FAA16)				X		
Regional trainings of district medical officers on the ownership of OV, LF and trachoma elimination programs (HKI) (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and from FAA#13 to FAA16)					X	
Regional trainings of district teams on the management of the NTDs program activities (HKI) (From FAA#1 to FAA#8 and from FAA#13 to FAA16)					X	
Advocacy						
Other						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1 – September 30, 2020

COTE D'VOIRE

Date: November 15, 2020

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of the Act to End NTDs | West Program, led by FHI 360 in partnership with Helen Keller International, Health and Development International, Deloitte, World Vision, Americares, and The AIM Initiative under Cooperative Agreement No. 7200AA18CA00011 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Adverse Event
ALB	Albendazole
APOC	African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
CDTI	Community-Directed Treatment with Ivermectin
CEMV	Center for Medical and Veterinary Entomology
CENI MTN CP	Committee of National and International Experts for PC-NTDs (equivalent to an OV expert committee)
CIND	Integrated NTD Database
CMFL	Community Microfilarial Load
CNCAM	National Commission for Coordinating Supplies of Essential Medicines and Strategic Health Products
CNER	National Committee on Ethics and Scientific Research
COGES	Management Committee
CSAS	Head of Health Service
CSE	Epidemiological Surveillance Manager
CSR	Rural Health Center
CSU	Urban Health Center
DGS	Office of the Director General of Health
DHIS2	District Health Information System 2
DOLF	Death to Onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis
DPML	Department of Pharmacy, Medicines, and Laboratories
DPPEIS	Department of Forecasting and Health Information Planning and Evaluation
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DR	Regional Directorate
ECD	District Management Team
ERS	Regional Health Team
ESPC	Front-Line Health Facility
ESPEN	Expanded Special Project for Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (WHO)
FAA	Fixed Amount Award
FHI 360	Family Health International
FTS	Filariasis Test Strip
GET	Global Elimination of Trachoma
GSK	Glaxo Smith Kline
GTMP	Global Trachoma Mapping Project
HD	Health District
HKI	Helen Keller International
HSS	Health Systems Strengthening
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Immuno-Chromatographic Test
IDA	Triple Drug Therapy with Ivermectin, Diethylcarbamazine, and Albendazole
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IVM	Ivermectin
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
LNSP	National Public Health Laboratory
LOE	Level of Effort

LSTM	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MDP	Mectizan Donation Program
MRU	Mano River Union
MSHP	Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene
NPSP	New Public Health Pharmacy
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
OCP	Onchocerciasis Control Programme
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive Chemotherapy
PGP	Pharmacy Preparer-Managers
PNDAP	National Program for Development of Pharmaceutical Activity
PNLMTN-CP	National Program for Control of Preventive Chemotherapy-Neglected Tropical Diseases
PNLSGF	National Program for the Control of Schistosomiasis, Soil-transmitted Helminthiasis and Lymphatic Filariasis
PNSO-LO	National Program for Eye Health and Onchocerciasis Control
PZQ	Praziquantel
RAFET	Francophone African Network of Expertise on Trachoma
RDT	Rapid Diagnostic Test
RGPH	General Census of Population and Housing
RPRG	Regional Programme Review Group
SAC	School-Age Children
SAE	Serious Adverse Event
SAFE	Surgery, Antibiotic therapy, Facial cleanliness, Environmental improvements
SCI	Schistosomiasis Control Initiative
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminths
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TBD	To Be Determined
TEO	Tetracycline Eye Ointment
TF	Trachoma – Follicular
TIPAC	Tool for Integrated Planning and Costing
TR	Trachoma
TT	Trachomatous Trichiasis
UFR	Training and Research Unit
WAHO	West African Health Organization
WASH	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FHI 360 is leading implementation of the USAID funded Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | West (Act | West) program in Côte d'Ivoire, following the closeout of the successful END in Africa project in September 2018. The new program extends from July 19, 2018 to July 18, 2023. The Act | West Program is supporting the Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene (MSHP)'s National Program for Control of Preventive Chemotherapy NTDs (PNLMTN-CP), (identified in the present report as the "NTDP").

This semi-annual report outlines the progress made during the period April 1–September 30, 2020. However, this period was also marked by COVID-19 restrictions which impacted Act | West's ability to support the implementation of all FY20 planned activities.

During this reporting period, FHI 360, in collaboration with the NTDP, was able to implement the following approval to restart activities:

- Pre-TAS in 46 health districts (HDs) including training for the survey team members and supervisors involved in implementation of the pre-TAS. This was the first pre-TAS conducted by the country. Preliminary results show that 37 HDs passed the pre-TAS.
- Training and mass drug administration (MDA): training of supervisors and community drug distributors (CDDs) for lymphatic filariasis (LF) MDA.
- Development of the FY21 work plan and budget which was subsequently approved by USAID.
- Preparation and facilitation of the political validation meeting of the Cote d'Ivoire sustainability plan.

Most activities in Côte d'Ivoire during the reporting period were postponed or cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene, which has been on the front line in the fight against this pandemic, had seen many of its directorates, health programs, and health facilities completely suspend or reduce their activities. The NTDP suspended all field activities on March 15, 2020. In April, FHI 360 supported the NTDP to review the timeline of activities impacted by the COVID 19 situation. The technical director, assisted by the LF lead and the Cote d'Ivoire program manager, conducted a series of meetings to discuss guidance provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) in relation to MDAs and DSAs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The remaining FY20 rollover activities will be implemented during the next six months, including the completion of the LF (plus OV and/or STH) and trachoma MDAs, data validation of MDAs, trachoma impact surveys (TIS), and monitoring and evaluation activities.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

A panel composed of FHI 360 Côte d'Ivoire, regional M&E, technical director, and senior program manager at headquarters, led the recruitment process to replace the M&E officer who resigned last January. The selected candidate, Ange Elvis Aba, started on June 1.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES

Strategic planning

FY21 Work Planning Workshops

FHI 360 Cote d'Ivoire conducted a series of preparatory meetings for the FY21 workplan development. The first draft list of activities for FY21 were developed and validated with the NTDP during a working session on June 4–5. On June 17, FHI 360 / HQ submitted the final list of activities to USAID after review and validation sessions with FHI 360 / Côte d'Ivoire and the NTDP. The process for to develop FY21 workplan narrative began with a work session with the NTDP on June 30 and July 1. The process of developing the FY21 work plan narrative continued with a second working session with the NTDP and Helen Keller International on July 15–16. The first draft of the workplan narrative package was submitted to HQ on July 28 and to USAID on August 18.

NTD Secretariat

Act | West provided ongoing support for the NTD Secretariat to coordinate and implement activities. This included support for fuel and maintenance costs for the NTDP generator.

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

There was no activity planned during the reporting period.

MDA coverage

FY20 MDA-related activities were planned but not conducted during the period due to the COVID-19 situation. Upon USAID approval to restart activities, the NTDP conducted the launch ceremony for MDA activities. The NTDP lead the cascade training for LF/OV/STH and trachoma MDAs; sensitization and social mobilization for MDA LF/OV/STH. LF/OV/STH MDA in 47 HDS and trachoma MDA in 11 HDs were postponed due to drug availability and election insecurity but are expected to be completed in November 2020.

FHI 360 with financial and technical assistance through the Act| West program supported the NTDP to conduct the OV standalone MDA in 20 HDs from September 28 to October 2. This activity was conducted in strict compliance with barrier measures against COVID-19.

Results are being analyzed and will be available during the next reporting period.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

The MDA launch ceremony took place in Bingerville on September 28. In attendance were the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene; Prefect of the Bingerville Department; Deputy-Mayor and Departmental Director of Health of Bingerville; Coordinating Director of NTDP; the authorities and customary chiefs of Bingerville; the WHO resident representative in Côte d'Ivoire; the M&E Manager of USAID, representing the USAID Country Director in Côte d'Ivoire; the program manager (PM) of Act | West; a representative of Sightsavers; and the resident representative of Helen Keller.



Minister of Health and Public Hygiene speaking during the MDA launch ceremony

The Act | West program supported production of TV advertisement and local radio spots and production of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials. IEC materials consisted of 9,395 posters, 500 caps for the NTD launch, 114,509 flyers, T-shirts (45,830 for CDDs and 437 for supervisors). In addition, 10,540 public criers took part in social mobilization to inform the public about MDA. Considering the COVID-19 context, these communication materials helped to clearly identify the individuals providing MDA services and facilitated the service provider access to households while observing COVID-19 risk mitigation measures.

Training

As part of the implementation of the LF pre-TAS in 46 HDs, a refresher training was organized in Yamoussoukro for the field technicians. The training was a follow-up of the initial training conducted in March 2020. The first stage took place on August 24 as a plenary session at Hôtel le Parlementaire with eight supervisors, 14 biologists and eight recorders in attendance. The session focused on pre-TAS protocol, data collection tools, and COVID-19 barrier measures to be observed in communities throughout the assessment. The second phase took place on August 25 at the two survey sites in the Yamoussoukro health district: the sentinel site in Toumbokro, and the control site in Seman. The training was devoted to the practical mastery of using FTS tests and compliance with COVID-19 barrier measures during field data collection.

On September 24–28, the NTDP facilitated the training of 2,613 MDA supervisors and 12,823 CDDs in the 74 HDs. The training focused on compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures during MDA, modes of transmission, clinical manifestations and complications. It also discussed drugs used during MDA; intervention strategies for prevention and elimination/control of LF, OV and STH; identification of LF morbidity cases; and specific measures relating to COVID-19 to be observed during MDA.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY 2020 (APR–SEP 2020)

Title	Location	Target participants e.g., HCW, CDD, community	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g., FHI 360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Training supervisors for LF /OV/STH MDA	Health district	Supervisors	Strengthen the capacity of supervisors for LF /OV/STH MDA	Sept 24-28, 2020	FHI 360	Knowledge of the treatment protocol for the diseases. Supervision keys. Identification of LF morbidity. Apply barrier measures against COVID-19 during MDA			2,613
Training CDDs for LF /OV/STH MDA	Health center	CDDs	Strengthen the capacity of CDDs for LF /OV/STH MDA	Sep 24-28 2020	FHI 360	Knowledge the treatment protocol. Identification of cases of complications of LF. Apply barrier measures against COVID-19 during MDA.			12,823
Training workshop for pre-TAS survey teams	Yamoussoukro	Lab technicians/ biologists, physicians, data entry clerks	Strengthen capacity of central-level players and investigators on pre-TAS implementation protocol	Aug 24-25 2020	FHI 360	Using FTS; using smartphones to collect results	26	4	30

Note that the male and female breakdowns of participants for the training of supervisors and CDDs for LF/OV/STH MDA is not yet available, but will be reported in the final FY20 program workbooks.

Supervision for MDA

The NTDP also supervised training for MDA supervisors and CDDs in the 74 HDs from September 24–28. Implementing MDA in the context of COVID-19 was a critical theme during trainings with national supervisors and the NTDP before the campaign. This enabled CDDs to identify how to proceed with the implementation of the distribution without major difficulties.

In addition, the NTDP carried out supervision for OV-only MDA in 20 HDs from September 28–October 2. Central and regional team members supervised the supervisors in each of the 20 HDs in the field to ensure the effective realization of the MDA and provide remedial actions as necessary to ensure effective coverage. An Act | West / FHI 360 team supervised this activity to ensure MDA activities were implemented in compliance with WHO recommendations and COVID-19 protective measures. The team visited the health districts of Toumodi, Yamoussoukro, Tiébissou, and Didiévi in the Bélier region.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

FY20 activities that were rolled over to FY21 appear in Appendix A: Planned Activities for the Next Six Months.

Through the Act | West program, FHI 360 provided financial and technical assistance to the NTDP to conduct the first LF pre-TAS in Cote d'Ivoire from August 25–September 14. This activity involved 46 endemic HDs that have received at least five rounds of MDA with an epidemiological coverage rate of at least 65% and geographic coverage of 100%. The pre-TAS examines a sentinel site and a spot-check site in each HD, performing filariasis test strip (FTS) tests on at least 400 people in each site. Of these 46 USAID-supported HDs, 28 were treated with the support of Act | West and 16 with Sightsavers.

In collaboration with FHI 360, the NTDP conducted refresher training on August 24, immediately followed by the pre-TAS in the 46 HDs from August 24–September 14. Overall, the pre-TAS surveys, which were implemented following strict COVID-19 protective measures, were well accepted among the communities. The crowd management, especially among children, was the main challenge (refer to challenges encountered section below). The preliminary results showed that out of the 46 HDs, nine HDs did not pass pre-TAS and therefore LF MDA will continue. Of the HDs that did not pass, seven are under USAID funding (Toulepleu, Adzope, Akoupe, Alepe, Yakasse-Attobrou, Gueyo, Zouan-Hounien) and two HDs are under Sightsavers funding (Doropo, Téhini). The data is being analyzed and a final report will be made available in the next period.

During the training of supervisors of LF/OV/STH MDA on Sept 24–25, AIM Initiative provided technical support to conduct cascade training in the selected districts Divo and Lakota (rather than Akoupe and Abengourou) on Sept 24–25. The training involved 21 participants from health regions and HDs and 82 supervisors to enable them collect reliable LF MMDP data using the MDA platform. This activity was initially planned for March but was postponed due to COVID-19.

The two new districts, Divo and Lakota, were selected for the following reasons: i) there are already some existing interventions in the earlier chosen two districts (via the DOLF project); ii) one of the two earlier districts is not part of the Act I West districts in Cote d'Ivoire; and iii) the new two districts chosen will benefit from Sightsavers-supported interventions, where hydrocele surgeries will be conducted after the case identification activities is completed. Finally, the CDDs will be trained with AIM Initiative's support during the week preceding the distribution in October. During the reporting period, the CDD training materials, including 675 flip charts and 3000 data collection forms, were printed.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

Through the Act | West program, FHI 360 provided financial and technical assistance to the NTDP to conduct supervision of LF pre-TAS in 46 HDs from August 25–September 14. From September 1–9, an Act | West team comprised of the FHI 360 program manager, M&E officer, and USAID NTD activity manager, Stephane Yao, participated in the supervision of this activity in Aboisso and Adiaké to ensure WHO protocol is followed and activities are implemented in strict compliance with COVID-19 protective measures. The M&E Officer also visited the sites of Abengourou, Agnibilekrou, Grand-Bassam.

Benjamin Guibei Koudou, a consultant, provided technical support to guide survey teams on field implementation of quality standards from the pre-TAS training. The Act | West LF focal point and Cote d'Ivoire program manager provided the required technical monitoring and direction during this consultancy, and the consultant followed all mandatory COVID-19 restrictions and precautions to prevent transmission of COVID-19. The Act | West LF focal point provided remote support to pre-TAS field teams by providing guidance and responding to questions from field teams via WhatsApp.

Dossier development

Training on the use of the WHO trachoma elimination dossier templates (narrative and datasheet) and the initial entry of available data into the datasheet, including training on LF dossier templates and requirements, planned for FY20, have been delayed due to COVID-19; it is tentatively rescheduled for Q2 of FY21. Regarding the LF dossier, the NTDP prioritized the successful implementation of pre-TAS and TAS1 in FY21, and the LF dossier training has been postponed to FY22.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

TABLE 2: SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Scope of work (include only short summary)	Consultant/s name	Period of consultancy	Status (completed, in- progress)
Provide technical support in translating established quality standards from the pre-TAS training into field implementation	Benjamin Guibei Koudou	Aug 31–Sep 30, 2020	Completed

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

Activities planned under this section were postponed due to COVID-19.

Drug management

Activities planned under this section were postponed due to COVID-19.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES (IR2)

Develop NTD sustainability plan

Following the sustainability plan finalization workshop in March, Act | West (FHI 360 and Deloitte) worked with the NTDP to consolidate the final draft of the plan including a timeline. This version was sent back to the NTDP for review and to commence preparations for the political validation meeting with the MSHP. Political validation is important in obtaining the endorsement of the Minister of Health to ensure that the plan will be followed and disseminated to relevant stakeholders. This sustainability plan will be part of the roadmap for all activities included in the NTD master plan over the next three years. During the reporting period, the NTDP conducted a series of preparatory meetings leading to the Sustainability plan's political validation in collaboration with all partners.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

There was no FY20 activity planned under this section during this reporting period.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

FHI 360, in coordination with Helen Keller International, facilitated the review of the final draft of the cross-sectoral landscape and barrier analysis report.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

In August 2020, the NTDP was granted approval from USAID to gradually resume its field activities considering the context of the pandemic in the country, and the barrier measures imposed by the health authority

The NTDP implemented strict measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while conducting pre-TAS and OV MDA. Protective measures include mandatory wearing of masks in public places, respect for physical distancing, and hand cleaning using either hand sanitizer or regular washing with soap and water were implemented. During trainings two-meter spacing was maintained between participants. Hand sanitizer was made available in training room for regular hand disinfection by participants. Vehicle travel took respect of a minimum of social distance in each vehicle into consideration. Only four passengers including the driver were allowed in each car. Temperature of each participant was taken before registration in each site survey sites and training venues. Furthermore, messages about COVID 19 was disseminated in the community before NTD activity by the district staff, the day before and even on the day of the activity.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

In August, the Act | West and the NTDP were granted approval from USAID to gradually resume field activities in the context of COVID-19 risk mitigation needs. Overall, the implementation of activities obtained support from the population despite apprehension before the pre-TAS survey regarding the reaction of the populations and the acceptance of the survey. Crowd management of children was the main challenge.

TABLE 3: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Crowd control during the implementation of pre-TAS in 46 HDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prioritized adults to reduce impatience and waiting time and allow them to quickly return to their business▪ Chairs were positioned 2 meters apart▪ One or two people were assigned to enforce and monitor social distancing measures▪ Sometimes, children were requested to wait along the wall to enable them to respect social distancing	resolved

APPENDIX A: PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

Table 4:FY 20 Activities to be implemented in FY 21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
Annual review meeting of Act West-supported FY20 PC-NTD activities (FHI 360)			X			
Workshop to validate the NTD Master Plan for 2021-2025 (FHI 360)			X			
Assess PC-NTD data storage and security needs (FHI 360)				X		
MDA Coverage						
LF plus OV and/or STH MDA in 74 HDs (FHI 360)		X				
Trachoma MDA in 11 HDs (FHI 360)		X				
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision of the LF plus OV and/or STH MDA in 74 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Supervision of trachoma MDA in 11 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Trachoma impact surveys (TIS) in 15 HDs (10 EUs) (FHI 360)			X			
22 regional data validation workshops for the LF plus OV and/or STH MDA in 74 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
9 regional data validation workshops for the trachoma MDA in 11 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Workshop for data entry in HD-level CIND, and export of files to the PNLMTN-CP for capture in central-level CIND, in 74 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Workshop to verify and monitor PC-NTD data entered in DHIS2 (FHI 360)			X			
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of CIND workshops in 74 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Supervision of TIS in 15 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Dossier Development						
Meeting for training on LF elimination dossier templates and initial data entry (FHI 360)			X			
Meeting for training on TR elimination dossier templates and initial data entry (FHI 360)			X			
Drug Management						
Supervision of incineration of empty bottles and other MDA waste in Act West-supported HDs (FHI 360)		X				
Develop NTD sustainability plan						
Political validation of the sustainability plan	X					
Dissemination of the sustainability plan at the decentralized level of the national system		X	X	X		

TABLE 5: FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
2021 Implementation and Operational Plan Validation Workshop (FAA 1)				X		
OV Expert Committee Meeting (Sightsavers)			X			
NTD Secretariat						
Communications and internet support to NTDP (FHI 360)		X				
Office and computer equipment support to NTDP (FHI): (2) desktop computers (2) i7 core laptops, 8GB of RAM		X				
Maintenance of the generator set and the refrigeration cabinets (FHI 360)		X				
Advocacy						
Social Mobilization						
Develop and produce IEC materials integrating COVID-19 measures for LF/OV/STH MDA in 69 HDs (FAA 2)					X	
Launch ceremony for NTD LF/OV/STH MDA in Daloa (FAA 2)						X
Broadcast TV spots for 69 HDs (LF/OV/STH MDA) (FAA 2)						X
Broadcast radio spots in 69 HDs (LF/OV/STH MDA) (FAA 2)						X
Social mobilization toward the community by public criers, and governors (community information meetings) for LF/OV/STH MDA in 69 HDs (FAA 2)						X
Training						
Training of CDDs for LF/OV/STH MDA in 69 HDs integrating COVID-19 measures (FAA 3)						X
Training of supervisors for -LF/OV/STH MDA in 69 HDs integrating COVID-19 measures (FAA 4)						X
LF pre-TAS (33 HDs)-trainings (FAA 9)					X	
Training for scaling up on improving MMDP data collection during MDAs to other health areas (AIM)						X
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Support for storage of MDA drugs at the NPSP and supplying the HDs (FHI 360)				X	X	X
Support for procurement of materials, and transport drugs and commodities from central level to Act West-supported HDs for LF/OV/STH MDA (FAA 1)				X		
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
LF/OV/STH MDA in 69 HDs (FAA 5, 6, and 7)						X
Supervision for MDA						
Cascade supervision: regional, HDs, CSPS, community level - training for LF/OV/STH MDA in 69 HDs, (FAA 8)						X
Supervision of LF/OV/STH MDA in 69 HDs (FAA 8)						X
Management of morbidities and prevention of disabilities						
Support scaling up collection of morbidity case data in 10 HDs (AIM Initiative)						X
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Pre-TAS in 33 HDs (FAA 9)					X	
Scale up on improving LF MMDP data collection during MDAs to other HDs (AIM Initiative)						X
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of LF Pre-TAS in 33 HDs (FAA 9)					X	
Dossier Development						
Short-Term Technical Assistance						

TABLE 5: FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
STTA for QA/QI Coaches training, Learning Session meetings (2 first sessions) (FHI)				X		
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Targeted TA to strengthen the NTDP's data security policies, procedures, and protocols in alignment with MOH guidance (Deloitte)					X	
TA and meetings to assess the feasibility of NIDB and DHIS2 interconnection and define a process to interconnect both systems (FAA 20)				X		
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
Establish a framework agreement between NTDCP Program and the NPSP for the management of NTDP drugs (FHI)				X		
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND HSS						
Governance Activities						
Establish a multisectoral TWG to define a roadmap aiming at integration of the NTDP with other sector policies and governance bodies (HKI)				X		
support to organize coordination meetings of the TWG on NTDs TAP update (HKI)					X	
Support to organize biannual thematic meetings on NTDs with all Ministry of Health stakeholder (HKI)				X		
TIPAC data analysis, financial gaps analysis and budget mapping workshop to support budget advocacy (Deloitte)				X		
Develop an NTDs investment case using the economic impact model to support domestic resources mobilization and budget advocacy (Pending on countries selection) (Deloitte)				X		
Appointing a champion in the fight against NTDs in Côte d'Ivoire (FHI 360)					X	
Prioritized Functions						
Organization of a follow-up workshop on the implementation of NTDs data FY20 MDA data in DHIS2 (FHI 360)				X		
Advocacy						
Engage the Ministry of Education to formalize the collaboration for the deworming (FAA 20)						x
Other						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						
To be decided						



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1-September 30, 2020

GHANA

Date: November 15, 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALB	Albendazole
CDC	The United States Centers for Disease Prevention and Control
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
CMS	Central Medical Stores
CNTD	Centre for Neglected Tropical Diseases
DDPH	Deputy Director (Public Health)
DSA	Disease Specific Assessment
ESPEN	Expanded Special Project for Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases
FTS	Filarial Test Strip
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GOEC	Ghana Onchocerciasis Expert Committee
GoG	Government of Ghana
HQ	Headquarters
ICCC	Intra-Country Coordinating Committee
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IVM	Ivermectin
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MMDP	Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention
NMIMR	Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
NTDP	Neglected Tropical Diseases Program
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive chemotherapy
PC NTDS	Preventive Chemotherapy Neglected Tropical Diseases
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Pre-TAS	Pre-Transmission Assessment Survey
PZQ	Praziquantel
RHIO	Regional Health Information Officer
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SCT	Supervisors' Coverage Tool
SHEP	School Health Education Program
SMM	Sustainability Maturity Model
STH	Soil Transmitted Helminthiasis
TA	Technical Assistance
TAS	Transmission assessment survey
TFGH	Task Force for Global Health
TOR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FHI 360 works closely with the Neglected Tropical Diseases Program (NTDP) of Ghana Health Services (GHS) to implement USAID's Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | West (Act | West) Program in Ghana, working together with other in-country Act | West consortium partners—World Vision and AIM Initiative.

The restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in suspension of most key activities planned over the reporting period from April 2020 on, leading to delay in implementation of many FY 20 planned activities including LF/OV/STH and SCH MDAs as well as TAS and pre-TAS. This also led to the need for additional funding and logistical requirements by the NTDP to safely conduct NTD activities in the country by ensuring that COVID-19 preventive measures were followed during implementation. The FHI 360 Ghana office, Act | West and the NTDP closely monitored the impact and progression of COVID-19 in the country and developed risk mitigation strategies and SOPs in preparation for restarting of USAID-funded NTD activities. After reviewing these strategies and SOPs, USAID gave approval to re-start activities beginning August 31 with COVID-19 risk mitigation protocol requirements. The NTDP re-started (field) activities September 3.

Over the reporting period, the NTDP conducted the annual portfolio review (internal work planning) meeting from June 8–9. The 2-day meeting helped the NTDP identify activities to be implemented in the next fiscal year (FY 21) and prepare preliminary budgets for the identified activities. The FHI 360 Ghana office and the NTDP conducted planning meetings to finalize the FY 21 work plan. These were mostly virtual meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions. FHI 360 country office received feedback from USAID/FHI 360 HQ and worked with the NTDP to provide responses and feedback to USAID questions and comments.

Through Act | West funding, the NTDP conducted lectures and training sessions for tutors and final year students of the College of Health and Well-Being in Kintampo in the Bono East region from June 29–July 2. The training focused on building capacity of upcoming front-line health staff on strategies for PC-NTDs control and elimination. A total of 601 disease control, field technician, and physician assistant students, as well as tutors and Ghana Health Service (GHS) staff, received training. Certificates were issued to all participants.

The NTDP organized a National Training of Trainers (ToT) meeting for Regional NTD focal Persons, regional Health Information Officers and Deputy Directors Public Health (DDPH) from all 16 regions on NTD registers and NTD data collection forms, with standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be used on the DHIMS 2 system. The meeting took place in Sunyani in the Bono region from September 29–October 1. The training was facilitated by the NTD program and Act | West M&E Advisor, with support from the National DHIMS 2 technical team. The core master trainers will organize similar trainings at the regional level for district teams. The district teams will then train frontline staff at the facility level to use the registers and forms and to enter data on NTD activities into the DHIMS 2 system.

The NTDP undertook re-pre-transmission assessment surveys in five districts. The 1-week exercise took place in two regions (Upper East and Upper West) from September 3–9. A total of 4,484 persons were sampled and assessed in the five districts with 100 persons testing positive. Only one district (Jirapa) passed the pre-TAS. In three of the four districts that did not pass, one site recorded FTS antigen prevalence less than 2%.

ACT | WEST ALSO CONTINUED TO PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO THE NTDP SECRETARIAT OVER THE REPORTING PERIOD. PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

FY20 activities that were rolled over to FY21 appear in Appendix A: Planned Activities for the Next Six Months.

Annual Portfolio Review (Internal Work Planning) Meeting

The Neglected Tropical Diseases Program (NTDP) conducted the annual portfolio review (internal work planning) meeting from June 8–9. The 2-day meeting aided the NTDP to identify activities that will be implemented in the next fiscal year (FY21) and prepare preliminary budgets for the identified activities. A list of proposed activities for FY21 was developed, which went through an initial FHI 360 headquarters (HQ) review on June 16 and a first USAID check-in meeting on June 22. Preparation of the draft FY21 workplan and budget narratives as well as the budget document then commenced.

FY 21 Work planning Meeting/Process

The FHI 360 Ghana office and the NTDP conducted planning meetings to finalize the FY21 work plan. These were mostly virtual meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions. The work plan was submitted to FHI 360 Headquarters for technical review. The NTDP and FHI 360 Ghana office addressed the comments from the FHI 360 technical team. The NTDP also developed the budget for FY 21. FHI 360 country office received feedback from USAID/FHI 360 HQ and worked with the NTDP to provide responses and feedback to USAID questions and comments.

NTD Secretariat

Act | West continued to provide administrative support to the NTDP Secretariat. The NTDP is supported with payment of utility bills (water and electricity), internet connectivity, and office stationery to ensure the program office runs smoothly. Act | West also funded servicing and repairs of official program vehicles and office equipment including air conditioners, printers/copiers, and the generator set. FHI 360 supports the program with technical advice and practical support on financial management. This includes office cash management, budgeting, and accurate accounting of program expenditures.

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

Planned advocacy engagements over the period, including media engagements, a high-level breakfast meeting with government officials and strategic stakeholders hosted by the NTD ambassador, and a sustainability plan development and validation workshop were postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Mapping

No disease mapping activities were conducted in the period under review. However, upon findings of a Task Force for Global Health (TFGH) funded study in three non-lymphatic filariasis (LF) endemic districts that suggested endemicity, the NTDP with support from Act | West convened a virtual LF experts meeting on August 19 to review the findings and guide programmatic decisions. The experts recommended confirmatory mapping in the three study districts as well as other non-endemic districts where analysis of

morbidity, baseline prevalence, and other risk factors indicate need for confirmatory mapping. The experts who attended the meeting included Jonathan King (WHO HQ), Didier Bakajika (WHO ESPEN), Annette Kuesel (WHO TDR), Felicia Owusu-Antwi (WHO Country Office, Ghana), Emily Toubali (USAID NTD), Daniel Boakye (NMIMR/END Fund), Dziedzom de Souza (NMIMR), Alexander Debrah (KNUST), Achille Kabore FHI 360/ Act | West), Benjamin Marfo (PM, NTDP) Ernest Mensah (FHI 360/Act|West), Michael Biredu (FHI 360/Act|West). WHO ESPEN has subsequently shared the protocol for LF confirmatory mapping with the NTDP.

Out of 260 districts in Ghana, 118 are LF endemic and 142 are non-endemic. The NTDP has significant LF morbidity data collected using Mass Drug Administration (MDA) platform, but data in non-endemic districts is limited. The NTDP indicated the need to conduct an exhaustive data analysis on the 142 non-endemic districts to determine which districts require confirmatory mapping without overestimating the need or leaving out districts that should be remapped. The Program set a tentative time of the end of November 2020 to complete this task. In the meantime, Act I West is supporting the NTDP through the following steps:

- A table has been developed to collate baseline prevalence, morbidity, relation with endemic districts, geographic elevation, etc., for analysis.
- Act | West will have meetings with NTDP to analyze collated data and select candidate districts in line with confirmatory mapping protocol shared by WHO/ESPEN.
- A brief dossier of the analysis and characteristics of districts selected for confirmatory mapping will be shared with WHO and USAID for input before finalizing.
- Preparation of budgets for confirmatory mapping.
- Discuss findings and budgets with USAID for input and roll out plan (considering funding need) for confirmatory mapping.
- Submit workplan addendum on the confirmatory mapping in Ghana for USAID approval.

MDA coverage

FY20 activities that were rolled over to FY21 appear in Appendix A: Planned Activities for the Next Six Months.

No MDA activities were conducted over the reporting period. Also, supply chain management (SCM) activities during the reporting period, including distribution of logistics, materials, and drugs for the MDA were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. With USAID approval to restart activities, the NTDP plans to undertake planned LF/OV/SCH MDAs in Q1 of FY21. The NTDP will commence distribution of drugs, materials, and other logistics for the MDAs from the central medical stores (CMS) to the regions. Distribution will begin in October 2020. Ivermectin (IVM) and albendazole (ALB) deliveries for MDA have arrived in-country. The NTDP has submitted the 2021 Joint Request for Medicines.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activitiesNo MDAs were conducted over the period, but during the re-pre-TAS activity, staff from the District Health Directorates, who were also part of the re-pre-TAS teams, carried out social mobilization and sensitization activities at the various antenatal clinics and outpatient departments (OPDs) in the health facilities in the communities selected for the pre-TAS. Messages included COVID-19 risk mitigation measures to be employed during the exercise. IEC materials were also posted at the implementation sites. FY20 activities that were rolled over to FY21 appear in Appendix A: Planned Activities for the Next Six Months.

Training

FY20 activities that were rolled over to FY21 appear in Appendix A: Planned Activities for the Next Six Months.

Training of Pre-Service Students and Staff

The NTDP held training sessions with tutors and final year students of the College of Health and Well-Being in Kintampo in the Bono East region from June 29–July 1. The training objective was to build capacity of upcoming front-line health staff on strategies for PC-NTDs control and elimination. They were taken through an overview of NTDs, MDA, Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention (MMDP), and social mobilization. The sessions were facilitated by the NTDP program manager and three technical officers of the NTDP. There was also a one-day orientation/training for the tutors and staff of Ghana Health Service from the Kintampo North Municipal Health Directorate and Kintampo Hospital. The total number of participants for this one-day orientation was 35. The three-day training for final year students involved 566 students, including 85 disease control, 176 field technician and 305 physician assistant students. Certificates were issued to the tutors, GHS staff, and students who participated in the training. Training modules were developed based on lecture notes delivered by PMs to students of the Public Health school. This is not part of a specific curriculum but a short-term measure to address the curriculum gap as engagements continue with the Council to incorporate NTD specific topics into the curriculum.

The NTDP will continue to engage with other health training institutions to offer training for tutors and students. The NTDP will also continue engagements with the College Council to include NTD topics in the curriculum of the training institutions in the long term.

Pre-TAS Training

A one-day training/orientation for 25 technicians and field team members was conducted on September 1 at the NTDP office in Accra prior to the teams commencing re-pre-TAS field activities in five districts in the Upper East and Upper West regions. The objective was to ensure that all team members and supervisors understood LF elimination and interventions, as well as the protocol and testing procedures employed in impact assessments. It also equipped participants with the requisite knowledge and skills to collect, transmit, and analyze data. The training also included practical sessions. Topics covered included overview of LF elimination in Ghana, impact assessments in LF elimination, re-pre-TAS protocol, using FTS for LF diagnosis, and D\data collection and analysis. Participants were taken through COVID-19 prevention and risk mitigation measures for themselves and participants for the re-pre-TAS activity and provided with hand sanitizers, disinfectants, medical facemasks, gloves, and thermometers.

National Training of Trainers on NTD Data Entry into DHIMS 2

The NTD Program is introducing new NTD forms into the Ghana Health Service (GHS) DHIMS 2 system, the main GHS database. These include LF/OV MDA forms, SCH/STH MDA forms, and forms on Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention (MMDP) activities. Aggregates of Disease Specific Assessments (DSAs) will appear in DHIMS 2, while the details will be in the electronic database platform of the NTDP (LYMPH Application). Introduction of these new forms into GHS DHIMS 2 required orientation/training on the standard operating procedures (SOPs) (e.g., definition of variables and the source documents). In line with this the NTDP organized a National Training of Trainers meeting for Regional NTD Focal Persons, Regional Health Information Officers (RHIO) and Deputy Directors Public Health from all 16 regions on all NTD Registers and NTD data collection forms, with (SOPs) to be used on the DHIMS 2 system. The main objectives of the training included the following:

- Introduce and train Deputy Director (PH), Regional Health Information Officers and Regional NTD Focal Persons on all NTDP data collection forms with their respective SOPs and selected NTDP Indicators to be tracked on DHIMS 2 .
- Provide regional teams with an in depth understanding of case definitions for all NTDs under the NTDP.
- Plan with regional teams on how to carry out regional and district trainings
- Provide regional teams with a hands-on DHIMS 2 data entry and report generation sessions on NTD Indicators.
- Plan with regional teams on operationalization of NTDs Data System (cascade training of districts and health facilities, deployment of Data collection Tools, Supervision etc.)

The meeting took place in Sunyani in the Bono region from September 29 to October 1. The training was facilitated by the NTD program with support from the National DHIMS 2 technical team. The core regional Master trainers will organize similar trainings at the regional level for district teams. The district teams will then train frontline staff at the facility level to use the registers and forms and do data entry on NTD activities into the DHIMS 2 system. The national NTD program Monitoring and Evaluation team will support and supervise all regional and district trainings.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY20 (APR-SEP 2020)

Title	Location	Target participants e.g. HCW, CDD, community)	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g. FHI 360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Training in Pre-service institution on PC-NTDs	Kintampo	Students and staff	-Sensitization on PC-NTDs -Build capacity on PC-NTDs control and elimination activities	Jun 29-Jul 2	FHI 360	Students and staff sensitized, and their capacity built on PC-NTD activities	273	328	601
LF Pre-TAS Impact Assessment (I.A)	Accra	HCW (Field staff)	Sample collection, documentation, Social mobilization	Sept 1	FHI 360	Field staff well equipped and prepared for I.A exercise	20	5	25
National ToT on NTD data entry into DHIMS 2	Sunyani	HCW (DDPHs, NTD Coordinators, RHIOs)	-Introduction to data collection forms -Case definitions for all NTDP NTDs -Plan for cascaded trainings -Hands-on DHIMS 2 data entry and report generation	Sept. 29-Oct. 1	FHI 360	Key health staff well versed with required NTD data entry into DHIMS 2 and prepared to roll out cascaded trainings	57	5	62

Supervision for MDA

No MDA supervision activity occurred over the period as the NTDP did not undertake any MDA activity.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

FY20 activities that were rolled over to FY21 appear in Appendix A: Planned Activities for the Next Six Months.

Re-pre-TAS

The NTDP undertook re-pre-TAS assessment survey activity in five districts in the Upper East and Upper West regions from September 3-9 using FTS. The districts involved were Nabdam in the Upper East region;

Jirapa, Lawra, Wa East and Wa West in the Upper West region. In each of the districts a sentinel site and a spot-check site were selected from two sub-districts for the survey. The re-pre-TAS activity was undertaken by five teams. Each team consisted of a supervisor/team leader, two Biomedical scientists, one data collector, one driver and a staff of the district health directorate who helped with the mobilization of the communities.

Field workers and supervisors were taken through COVID-19 prevention and risk mitigation measures for themselves and participants for the pre-TAS activity. They were then provided with hand sanitizers, disinfectants, medical facemasks, gloves and thermometers. All vehicles were cleaned and disinfected before boarding. Each travel team consisted of one driver and two passengers at the back seat, with all occupants in facemasks and provided with hand sanitizers. The teams documented the performance of the test kit (FTS) in the field. The teams also used an Electronic data collection platform (LYMPH) for data collection and management. A total of 4,484 persons were sampled from the five districts assessed and 100 tested positive. Blood samples were collected from these positive cases for DBS, brief histories taken, and they were treated with Ivermectin and albendazole under direct observation. Lists of all positive cases were compiled and presented to the respective district directorates for follow-up to ensure the cases and their households were treated during subsequent MDAs. Only one district- Jirapa with a prevalence of 0.6% - passed. In three of the four districts that failed, one site recorded FTS antigen prevalence less than 2%. The Act | West team was in the field to monitor the field activities. The preliminary results have been presented and discussed by FHI and USAID.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

Supervision of re-pre-TAS in five districts was conducted during the reporting period. A total of five teams were formed for the re-pre-TAS exercise. Each team was made up of five members-A supervisor/team leader, a recorder/support staff and two Biomedical Scientists and a driver. The principal role of the supervisor was to ensure a seamless implementation of the survey and adherence to protocol. The Act| West team was also in the field to monitor the pre-TAS activity and observance of COVID-19 risk mitigation protocols.

The NTDP demonstrated strong intent to carry out and observe strict COVID-19 mitigation measures during the field activity, as outlined in their standard operating procedures (SOPs) and strategies shared with USAID. At the community visited by the Act| West team this was apparent, and the following COVID-19 protocols were observed:

- Temperatures were taken before each individual participated.
- A handwashing facility was provided to facilitate and ensure handwashing.
- Participants were given free re-usable facemasks which were worn before samples were taken for examination.
- Physical distancing of two meters was observed as participants queued for samples to be taken, albeit with some difficulty and constant supervision.
- All team staff were in medical facemasks, gloves, and equipped with hand sanitizer.
- Workstations were regularly disinfected, and participants were attended to one at a time at the station.
- Waste generated was incinerated at facilities in the districts, according to Ghana Health Service (GHS) waste management policy guidelines.

Dossier development

No dossier development activities were conducted during the reporting period.

A training on the LF dossier narrative and data templates planned in FY20 has delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. In FY21, Act | West will support the NTDP to enter available LF MDA and DSA data into the LF dossier data file. The NTDP will decide on the strategy for developing a first draft LF dossier narrative after the training which will be facilitated by Act | West LF focal point.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

The NTDP did not request for short-term technical assistance over the reporting period.

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

The NTDP is in the process of integrating NTD indicators into the national HMIS (DHIMS 2): the NTDP has received approval within GHS for the inclusion of NTD data in the HMIS and has defined the NTD indicators for integration, which the NTDP identified by engaging key stakeholders and decisionmakers in GHS. The NTD program has developed two reporting forms (NTD monthly Reporting form and MDA Reporting form) for the reporting of monthly NTD Morbidity and MDA Data into the main Ghana Health Service Data Management system DHIMS 2. Training of health staff on the reporting forms and data entry into DHIMS 2 as well as printing of the forms has begun with a National Training of Trainers workshop organized from September 29 -October 1, 2020. This will be followed by cascaded trainings to the facility levels.

Drug management

ASCEND organized a virtual meeting/workshop involving the NTDP, partners, ESPEN, CMS, and other stakeholders to discuss supply chain management (SCM) issues, including review of ESPEN SOPs on supply chain management including NTD drug and waste management vis a vis the SOPs document of Ghana NTDP. The meeting took place from September 9-10, 2020 and was facilitated mainly by the ASCEND SCM focal point, Chantelle Genovezos. It emerged at the meeting after discussions that both documents had a lot of similarities. The NTDP thus decided to adopt and adapt the ESPEN SOPs in principle for use in-country for NTD drugs and commodities management. The NTDP has made some inputs into the ESPEN SOPs document for consideration and review by ESPEN and will complete the review after receiving feedback from ESPEN.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES (IR2)

Develop NTD sustainability plan

Act| West is collaborating with the NTDP to develop a draft country NTDP sustainability plan with results from the Sustainability Maturity Model and Landscape and Barrier Analysis serving as building blocks of the sustainability plan. A high-level sustainability Plan workshop to validate and disseminate the Ghana Sustainability Plan was planned for March 2020 but had to be postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. With the easing of restrictions and subsequent re-start of NTDP activities, the NTDP plans to hold this event in January 2021.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

The NTDP did not undertake any activity in this area over the reporting period

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

A multi-sector working group made up of members from Act | West, Sightsavers, Water AID, the NTDP, Program Managers of the Case Management NTDs, Ministry of Sanitation, Ministry of Local Government, GES, and the Health Promotion and Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME) Divisions of the GHS was constituted to work closely with the NTDP in developing a roadmap to revamp the Intra Country Coordinating Committee (ICCC) for NTDs. A high-level re-launch of the ICCC planned for June had to be postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. With the easing of restrictions and resumption of NTD activities, work on the re-launch was restarted. Subsequently, the Minister of Health indicated (on September 29, 2020) his availability to re-launch the ICCC. The NTDP therefore intends to organize a 3-day workshop from October 12-14, 2020 to finalize and validate all aspects for the re-launch, including Membership, Terms of reference etc., culminating in the official launch of the ICCC by the Minister of Health on October 14, 2020.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, both the Ghana NTDP and Act | West are aware that standard operation procedures (SOP) must be in place for the implementation of NTD activities in order to protect all individuals involved in NTDP activities, including field staff, drug distributors, trainers, partners, NTDP staff and other GHS staff and community members during meetings, MDA activities and impact surveys. The NTDP has come up with COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies and SOPs for its various planned activities and in different scenarios/settings. These settings include meetings and trainings, travel, social mobilization, drug distribution, surveys (DSAs), as well as monitoring and supervision. This has also resulted in the need for additional funding and logistical requirements (e.g. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), fuel, sanitizers etc.) for the NTDP to safely conduct NTD activities in the country.

The NTDP has shown commitment to adhering to its COVID-19 risk mitigation protocols and SOPs shared with USAID during implementation of its activities. The NTDP has ensured adequate spacing (2m) at meetings, provision of hand washing stations, sanitizers, and disinfectants for staff and participants in the field, wearing of appropriate facemasks, temperature checks and increasing the fleet of vehicles during travel to ensure adequate seating protocols. The Program has also included and intensified COVID-19 risk mitigation messages in its social mobilization and public education materials and exercises. With the continuous easing of COVID-19 restrictions due to steady improvement in the COVID-19 situation in the country, the NTDP is poised to implement and complete all delayed FY 20 planned activities and commence implementation of FY 21 planned activities.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 2: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS		
Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
The restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in suspension of most key activities planned over the reporting period. This has also resulted in additional funding and logistical requirements (e.g. PPEs) to safely conduct NTD activities in the country as well as delay in implementation of many FY 20 planned activities.	The FHI 360 Ghana office, Act West and NTDP closely monitored the impact and progression of COVID-19 in the country and developed risk mitigation strategies and SOPs in preparation for restarting of USAID funded NTD activities. USAID approved re-start of activities from August 31, 2020, with COVID-19 risk mitigation protocol requirements, after reviewing the strategies and SOPs. The NTDP immediately re-started (field) activities from September 3, 2020	COVID-19 restrictions continue to be eased as the COVID-19 situation in the country improves, enabling more outstanding activities to be implemented and completed. Status: Pending

APPENDIX A: PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 3: GHANA FY20 ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
Technical review meeting (1 meeting)						
Intra-Country coordinating committee (1 meeting)						
LF MDA annual review meeting (1meeting)						
NTD Secretariat						
Building Advocacy for a Sustainable National NTD Program						
Advocacy engagement with Parliamentary sub-committee on health						
Advocacy by NTD ambassador						
MDA launch						
Media engagement						
Mapping						
Confirmatory mapping for non-LF Endemic districts						
MDA Coverage						
Community based MDA for LF/ OV/ STH						
LF hotspots engagements in 12 HDs in 5 regions						
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities						
Social mobilization for LF/OV/STH MDA in 138 districts						
Training						

TABLE 3: GHANA FY20 ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
National level training of trainers- LF/OV/STH MDA in 138 districts						
Regional level training -LF/OV/STH MDA in 138 districts						
District level training -LF/OV/STH MDA in 138 HDs						
Training of CDDs subdistrict level- LF, OV/ STH MDAs 138 HDs						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Transport of drugs and materials for LF/OV/STH MDA 138 districts						
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision & monitoring of LF/OV/STH MDA by National Program Officers						
Supervision of LF/OV/STH MDA by Regional, Districts & Sub District Officers						
Sub district supervision of LF/OV/STH by Sub District Officers						
District level health workers to monitor and supervise drug distribution						
District level officers to supervise updating of community registers						
Subdistrict level officers to supervise updating of community registers by CDDs						
Supervision of program finances (finance monitoring)						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS in 11 districts (4 EUs)						
Inclusion of program data into WHO database; training of trainers and regional health staff						
Coverage Survey in 7 districts						
Updating of Community Registers used by CDDs						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of LF TAS 11 (4EUs)						
Supervision of coverage survey in 7 districts						
Supervision of updating of community registers by CDDs						
Dossier Development						
Training on the LF dossier narrative and data templates						
Data security and management						
Drug Management						
Develop NTD sustainability plan						
Sustainability plan development workshop						

TABLE 3: GHANA FY20 ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance						
Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms						
ICCC Re-launch event as multisector coordination mechanism						

TABLE 4: GHANA FY21 WORK PLAN ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
Annual NTDP Activities Implementation Planning Meeting (FHI FAA 1)						
Intra-Country Coordinating committee meeting (FHI FAA 1)						
QI Learning session to disseminate best practices implementation to more HDs (no budget)						
GOEC Ad hoc Meetings (FHI FAA 1)						
NTD Secretariat						
Support for communication and administrative costs (FHI FAA 1)						
Advocacy						
Media Engagement (FHI FAA 1)						
World NTD Day (FHI 360)						
Social Mobilization						
Training						
Assessment of the readiness and quality of services for lymphedema management and hydrocelectomy provided in MMDP-designated facilities in Ghana						
Training of nursing school trainers on LF MMDP to build capacity to teach the modules included in the NMC curriculum (AIM)						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Completion and submission of the JRSM (FHI)						
Mapping						
LF data collection, review, and development of proposal for re-mapping						
MDA Coverage						
Supervision for MDA						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Conduct pre-TAS in 7 HDs (FHI FAA 8)						
Conduct TAS 1 in 5 HDs in 5 EUs (FHI FAA 8)						
Conduct TAS 3 in 5HDs in 2EUs (FHI FAA 8)						
Printing of reporting forms (FHI FAA 7)						
OV Stop MDA (Epidemiological survey) in60 HDs in 2 TZ -Pra-Offin, Asukawkaw-Dayi (FHI FAA 10)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						

TABLE 4: GHANA FY21 WORK PLAN ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Supervision of LF pre-TAS (FHI FAA 8)						
Supervision of LF TAS 1 (FHI FAA 8)						
Supervision of LF TAS 3 (FHI FAA 8)						
Supervision for OV Stop-MDA in 2 TZ (FHI FAA 10)						
Dossier Development						
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Targeted Data Security TA to strengthen the NTDP's data security policies, procedures, and protocols in alignment with MOH guidance and based on data security leading practices (Deloitte)						
Data Management Technical Meetings (FHI FAA 1)						
Inclusion of program data into WHO database: Regional Health Information officers in all 16 regions trained to enter MDA data into WHO NTD database (FHI FAA 7)						
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND HSS						
Governance Activities						
Economic Impact Model Training to enable the NTDP to estimate the benefits of investing in NTD programming and interventions and, in turn, develop investment cases to advocate for domestic resources and prioritize NTD investments in a multi-disease environment (Deloitte)						
Resource Mobilization & Budget Advocacy Work Session to support the NTDP in prioritizing advocacy objectives for domestic resource mobilization, budget advocacy activities listed in the NTD Sustainability Plan, and craft targeted messaging to effectively engage stakeholders in advocacy						
Support bi-annual Intra-Country Coordinating Committee (ICCC) meetings to strengthen monitoring of NTD sustainability cross-sectoral approaches. (World Vision)						
Support the NTDP to establish the Ghana SCH/STH Expert Committee						
Prioritized Functions						
Support NTDP to develop a joint and targeted action plan formalize the collaboration with relevant sectors, particularly SHEP (education) and Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (WASH) (World Vision)						
Other						
HMIS Integration Documentation (Deloitte)						
STTA						
Review and analyze current SBCC materials and messages for NTD integration with WASH, Malaria, Nutrition, MCH, and Education.						
IR3: SCH, STH, SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES						
Advocacy (IR3 only)						

TABLE 4: GHANA FY21 WORK PLAN ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Social Mobilization (IR3 only)						
Social mobilization for SCH/STH MDA in 55 HDs (SCH only) (FHI FAA 1)						
Training (IR3 only)						
Training for CCDs for Community Based SCH MDA in 55 HDs (FAA 3)						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement (IR3 only)						
MDA Coverage (IR3 only)						
Community-based SCH MDA in 55 HDs (FHI FAA 3)						
Supervision for MDA (IR3 only)						
Super vision of Community SCH MDA in 55 HDs (FHI FAA 7)						
Monitoring and Evaluation (IR3 only)						
SCH/STH Impact assessment (FHI FAA 8)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs (IR3 only)						
Supervision for SCH/STH Impact Assessment (FHI FAA 8)						
Short Term Technical Assistance (IR3 only)						



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020- September 30, 2020

GUINEA

Date: November 15, 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALB	Albendazole
APOC	African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control
ASCEND	Accelerating the Sustainable Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases
AcceleraTE	Accelerate Trachoma Elimination
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
CDTI	Community-Directed Treatment with Ivermectin
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CY	Calendar Year
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DNPM	National Directorate of Pharmacies and Drugs
DSA	Disease-Specific Assessment
EU	Evaluation Unit
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FHI	Family Health International
FOG	Fixed Obligation Grant
FY	Fiscal Year
GOG	Government of Guinea
HD	Health District
HKI	Helen Keller International
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IPA	Ivermectin, Praziquantel, and Albendazole
ITI	International Trachoma Initiative
IVM	Ivermectin
JAP	Joint Application Package
JRSM	Joint Request for Selected preventive chemotherapy Medicines
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
LFOEC	Lymphatic filariasis/onchocerciasis elimination committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MOH	Ministry of Health
MRU	Mano River Union
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
OCP	Onchocerciasis Control Program in West Africa
OMVS	Organisation pour la mise en valeur du fleuve Sénégal (Senegal River Basin Development Organization)
OPC	Organization for the Prevention of Blindness
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive Chemotherapy
PCG	Central Pharmacy of Guinea
PGIRE	Projet de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en Eau et de Développement des usages à buts multiples (Integrated Water Resource Management Project)
PNLOC/MTN	National Program for the Control of Onchocerciasis and Blindness/Neglected Tropical Diseases
PNLMTN	National Program for NTD Control
PZQ	Praziquantel
SAC	School-aged Children
SAE	Serious Adverse Events

SAFE	Surgery–Antibiotics–Facial cleanliness–Environmental improvements
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SIZ	Special Intervention Zone
SL	Sierra Leone
SNSSU	National School and University Health Service
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminths
TAP	Trachoma Action Plan
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TEO	Tetracycline Eye Ointment
TF	Trachoma Inflammation – Follicular (active trachoma)
TIS	Trachoma Impact Survey
TIPAC	Tool for Integrated Planning and Costing
TRA	Trachoma
TSS	Trachoma Surveillance Survey
TT	Trachomatous trichiasis
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
ZTH	Zithromax®

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID's Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) | West program is led by FHI 360 and is implemented by Helen Keller in Guinea. This report covers activities implemented during the second half of Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 2020) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Guinea.

Guinea has had a challenging year as many planned FY19 activities, including the MDA and surveys, had been carried over to be completed in FY 2020. These carried-over activities, referred to as calendar year 2019 (CY 2019), were planned to be conducted in early FY20 before the end of the 2019 calendar year. However, due to delays in FAA approvals and a shifting presidential election date, all of these CY 2019 activities have not yet been completed.

Like other countries in the world, Guinea has been facing the COVID-19 pandemic since March 12, 2020. To control this pandemic, the government has taken measures such as declaring a state of emergency, imposing a lockdown in the city of Conakry (the epicenter), closing international borders, prohibiting groupings of more than 30 people, and making mask wearing compulsory. These containment measures have had a huge impact on essential services, including the implementation of NTDs mass drug administration. In accordance with WHO guidance, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Helen Keller – Guinea, suspended all NTD activities, pending proper mitigation measures.

To continue providing NTD interventions in the context of COVID-19 and preserve the gains and progress made in Guinea, the national NTDs program developed a contingency plan to consider restarting NTD activities, chiefly mass drug administration (MDA). Just before the suspension of activities, Helen Keller – Guinea had conducted the supervision of the training of community drug distributors (CDDs) and MDA supervisors in the 19 health districts (HDs) under Act | West support.

Members of the Helen Keller – Guinea team and National Program (PNLMTN) participated in several NTD-drugs meetings via teleconference organized with WHO/ESPEN to strengthen the capacity of the National Program (PNLMTN) in the Joint Application Package (JAP) process and to assess and agree on the projections for FY21. Helen Keller – Guinea participated in an online webinar facilitated by WHO/ESPEN. The purpose of this webinar was to provide technical guidance to countries on how to review the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for drug management and to develop a timeline for their review, validation, and implementation at the country level. These SOPs include:

- Joint application package
- Shipping alert and green light checklist
- Customs clearance and delivery
- Transport
- Inventory management
- Storage
- First expiry, first out
- Reverse logistics
- Disposal of expired and unusable drugs
- Waste management
- Forecasting and quantification

Helen Keller – Guinea, with Helen Keller/HQ support, organized a meeting on the trachoma elimination dossier in Guinea via teleconference to prepare Guinea for the submission of the dossier and to underline the progress which has been achieved in the country in terms of trachoma elimination.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

During the period, Helen Keller – Guinea recruited a program assistant to replace the NTD program assistant. The procurement of both a vehicle and a generator was initiated during the reporting period.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

A series of NTDs activities were planned in Guinea from April 2020 to September 2020 in accordance with the Act | West FY20 work plan approved by USAID. During this reporting period, the program was faced with a shifting presidential election timeline and civil unrest which has led to delays in the implementation of the activities as set out in the initial Act | West approved calendar. The details of each activity conducted towards meeting the objectives are provided below.

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic Planning

Over the course of this reporting period, Act | West supported the following strategic planning activities for IR1.

Work plan meeting FY21

Helen Keller – Guinea began supporting the National Program (PNLMTN) in the development of the FY21 work plan. The first workplan checkpoint meeting was held via ZOOM on June 17, 2020. The meeting included participants from Ministry of Health, Helen Keller-HQ, Helen Keller-Regional, Helen Keller-Guinea, FHI 360 and USAID Washington to discuss the activities presented in the priority activity list. Helen Keller – Guinea will continue to support the PNLMTN during the drafting of the workplan package (technical narrative, budget, and budget notes).

NTD Secretariat

During the reporting period, Act | West provided support to the National Program (PNLMTN) to purchase credit for PNLMTN mobile phones, internet connection, and office supplies. Act | West provided the PNLMTN with an internet connection subscription for a year and purchased two laptops for new PNLMTN staff (M&E officer and communication officer). In the context of COVID-19, Act | West provided internet connection services for eight PNLMTN staff that were used exclusively for participating in Act | West activities planning. This access to improved connectivity allowed Helen Keller – Guinea and PNLMTN staff to work from home during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

No advocacy activities were carried out during the reporting period

Mapping

No mapping was required in Guinea in FY 2020.

MDA Coverage

The MDA campaign supported by Act | West was conducted in three stages:

- Stage 1: August 20–25 in nine HDs, including the administration of ivermectin, praziquantel and albendazole (IPA): LF-OV-STH-SCH in five HDs; LF only in one HD; LF-OV-STH in one HD; LF-STH in one HD; and LF-OV in one HD.
- Stage 2: August 30–September 4 in 10 HDs, including the IPA MDA for LF-OV-SCH-STH in four HDs, LF-OV-SCH in two HDs, LF-OV-STH in three HDs and LF-OV in one HD.
- Stage 3: September 27–October 2, trachoma MDA in one HD.

CDD Census

This is the first year that the Guinea NTDP carried out a CDD census before the MDA. Previously, the official census data provided by the GOG from the official 2014 census were used. However, in previous years, coverage rates >100% indicated that some HDs had a higher population than stated and so carrying out a CDD census was supported by the PNLMTN and Act | West. The CDD census carried out during the MDA showed a much lower than expected population. While it is common that a CDD census reflects a lower population, Helen Keller – Guinea and Helen Keller-Global offices would like to understand more about how the census was conducted. This discussion is likely to take place in November 2020, due the limited availability of the PNLMTN. **Table 1** below shows the MDA coverage data using the official GOG population numbers.

It is likely that some HDs did not reach sufficient epidemiological coverage in FY20 and an in-depth analysis will be conducted with the PNLMTN in early FY 2021. Contributing factors for this drop in coverage are as follows:

- There was a gap of 28 months between the last MDA and the FY20 MDA, which mean lower participation in the MDA.
- Despite not finding evidence of a lack of participation in the MDA due to COVID-19, the pandemic may have had a negative impact on coverage.
- The MDA was conducted during August and September, during the rainy season and a period of more intense agricultural work where many people may have been working in fields.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

All social mobilization field activities were carried out during the reporting period. All social mobilization activities for MDA1 (local broadcasting about PC-NTDs, town criers, mobile sound system) were completed in 19 HDs. In the context of COVID-19, special emphasis was placed on communication to counter false rumors already circulating in the communities. Messages to raise awareness on NTD and COVID-19 barrier measures were broadcast on rural radio stations as well as mobile sound systems and town criers before and during the MDA. Community leaders also assisted with sensitization, and laminated boards containing images of sensitization against COVID-19 were distributed to all CDDs for community sensitization.

National and local broadcasting about PC-NTDs on national TV and national and local radio in 19 HDs

Helen Keller – Guinea recruited graphic designers to produce short interviews and success stories of drug administrations on beneficiaries, using professional videos and photos to highlight the human impact of

free drug distribution on the lives of beneficiaries. The graphic designers, accompanied by an HKI supervisor, have been working since August 23 to accomplish the work requested.

Training

Training of CDDs

Helen Keller – Guinea and the PNLMTN supervised the training of community distributors in 19 HDs. The first phase of MDA 1, which began on August 18, included the training of 5,118 CDDs in nine HDs, and the second phase involved 6,668 CDDs in 10 HDs. Twenty to 30 people maximum were grouped in large, well-ventilated rooms in schools of the different HDs in strict compliance with the COVID-19 barrier measures, including mask-wearing, social distancing, and hand-washing.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY20 (APR–SEPT 2020)

Title	Location	Target participants e.g., HCW, CDD, community	Objective	Date	Lead organization (e.g., FHI 360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome	# of participants		
							M	F	T
CDD training	Health centers	7,657	-Strengthen the capacity of CDDs on MDA management (MDA drug management -Social mobilization for MDA -Reporting data on the registers during MDA)	Aug 19-20 and Aug 28-29, 2020	Helen Keller	11,464 CDDs trained with Act West funding	7,657	3,807	11,464

Supervision for MDA

Helen Keller – Guinea and the PNLMTN supervised the implementation of the LF/OV/SCH/STH MDA in 19 HDs and the trachoma MDA in Dinguiraye HD. The distribution campaign was carried out in three steps:

- August 16–28, 2020: nine HDs (Boké, Forécariah, Gaoual, Guéckédou, Kindia, Kissidougou, Koundara, Lélouma and Telimélé) in LF/OV/SCH/STH MDA
- August 30–September 6, 2020: 10 HDs (Dabola, Dinguiraye, Faranah, Kankan, Kérouané, Kouroussa, Mandiana, Sigui, Beyla and Macenta) in LF/OV/SCH/STH MDA
- September 27–October 2, 2020: Dinguiraye for trachoma MDA

In addition to supervising the distribution, the supervisors also supported the implementation of the COVID-19 barrier measures, correcting any observed weaknesses as soon as possible. Supervision was carried out by Helen Keller – Guinea staff, the PNLMTN staff, and external supervisors.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

No M&E activities were conducted during the reporting period.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

No supervision for M&E and DSA activities were conducted during the reporting period.

Dossier development

Helen Keller – Guinea, with Helen Keller/HQ support, organized an introductory meeting on the trachoma elimination dossier in Guinea. The meeting was conducted via teleconference on May 28, 2020 and was attended by 25 participants from the Ministry of Health, USAID Washington, Helen Keller-HQ, Helen Keller – Regional, Helen Keller – Guinea, FHI 360, Sightsavers – HQ, and Sightsavers – Guinea. The main objective of the meeting was to prepare Guinea for the trachoma elimination dossier process and to underline the progress made in terms of trachoma elimination objectives.

At the end of the discussions, some recommendations were made:

- Make all trachoma data available to the national program, including WASH data
- Analyze the historical data and look for missing data
- Develop a post-elimination surveillance plan and a post-validation plan to manage incident trachomatous trichiasis (TT) patients
- Set up the trachoma elimination dossier preparation committee and a trachoma expert committee to provide strategic, technical advice to NTD national coordination regarding process toward trachoma elimination in Guinea
- Outline the meeting schedule for follow up on the preparation of the trachoma elimination dossier

Short-term technical assistance

No short-term technical assistance was provided during the reported period.

TABLE 2: SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Scope of work (include only short summary)	Name of consultant/s	Period of consultancy	Status (completed, in- progress)
N/A			

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTD ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

During this period, Act | West provided financial assistance to the National NTD Program to purchase a computer to be used for the country integrated NTD database (CIND). The NTD data are safely stored in the CIND. Helen Keller's M&E officer trained PNLMTN staff on how to use and update the database. The CIND has been updated with data from 2017 and 2018 and has been installed on the computers of the Deputy Coordinator and the M&E officer of the PC-NTD unit at the PNLMTN. A copy of the database can be found on the computer of Helen Keller's M&E officer. The database is not yet installed on the new desktop computer, but the update is not yet completed for 2019 and 2020 data.

Drug management

Drug management standard operating procedures (SOP)

Helen Keller – Guinea organized and facilitated an online meeting on the drug management standard operating procedures (SOP) manual on July 1–2, 2020. Participants included representatives from the National Program (PNLMTN), Helen Keller-Guinea, WHO-Guinea, and Sightsavers. The main outcome was the finalization of the responsibility matrix, which outlines who the stakeholders are and how they are involved in the process. Some ENVISION-purchased tetracycline ointment was destroyed under controlled conditions by the PCG during the reporting period.

Bi-monthly meeting to update the status of PC-NTD MDA drugs

Helen Keller – Guinea organized two meetings on drug management, one in July 2020 and one in September 2020. Participants included Central Pharmacy of Guinea (PCG), the PNLMTN, Sightsavers, and Helen Keller. The purpose of the meeting was to provide updates on the status of the NTD drugs. The recommendations from the meeting were to correspond with stakeholders prior to any drug inventory and advocate with the PCG to receive expired drugs from the PNLMTN store for destruction.

NTD supply chain management SOP review

Helen Keller – Guinea and the PNLMTN participated in an online webinar facilitated by WHO/ESPEN on June 15, 2020. The purpose of this webinar was to provide technical guidance to countries on how to review the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and develop a timeline for their review, validation, and implementation at the country level. The SOP working group will follow up with each country to verify that the Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) matrix is completed, and countries will submit a SOP feedback form with their review of the SOPs.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES (IR2)

Develop NTD sustainability plan

N/A

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

Helen Keller – Guinea participated in an online webinar on reviewing and analyzing SCH data at the sub-district level to refine the disease map and make better use of available prevalence data. The meeting was facilitated by WHO/ESPEN and held on July 23, 2020. The meeting provided updates on the progress of SCH in the region, exercises on how to use the sub-district analysis tool, and discussions on the timelines for joint application package submission and drug management.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

No cross-sector activities were carried out during the reporting period

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

To continue providing NTD interventions in the context of COVID-19 and preserve the progress made in Guinea, the national NTD program developed a contingency plan which took into consideration all relevant steps in the process of MDA implementation required to restart NTD activities under COVID-19. The PNLMTN worked with Helen Keller and FHI 360 to complete this SOP and risk mitigation strategy.

Copies of the SOP and other relevant documentation were provided to FHI 360 and USAID. The actions taken to reduce the impact of COVID-19 were as follows:

- COVID-19 testing for authorization to leave Conakry for all participants: two members of the central-level team tested positive prior to leaving Conakry; they went into quarantine and were replaced
- Reduced number of people traveling in cars to the field
- Mask-wearing required for all citizens outside their homes at the time of the MDA
- House-to-house MDA distribution
- Provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and handwashing kits by the MoH for supervisors and CDDs; soap offered by Act | West
- Training of CDDs on COVID-19 prevention and sensitization
- Social mobilization was used to discourage large gatherings prior to the MDA
- Training, launching, synthesis meetings (<30 people) with the correct use of masks and proper social distancing
- A COVID-19 monitoring checklist (CMT) was developed that used electronic data capture to ensure compliance with the barrier measures. The CMT was completed by supervisors, and data were reviewed daily to ensure compliance with the COVID-19 barrier measures. Any observed non-compliance was corrected by phone before the next day.
- Overall, there was little reticence to participate in the MDA from either the community or the CDDs. There was some resistance to having masked CDDs enter households in a few health center areas (after the community experience with Ebola), but discussions with community leaders were held to carry on with the MDA (see Figures 1 and 2).
- Dose poles were suspended on walls or trees to ensure that beneficiaries did not touch them.
- Pills were distributed to beneficiaries using the bottle lid to avoid touching recipients' hands.
- The change in the methodology and increased time spent discussing the MDA in the context of COVID-19 doubled the time the CDDs spent with each household. This finding has implications for future MDAs and budgeting.
- A report with photos on the first phase of the MDA was prepared and sent to FHI 360 and USAID. Helen Keller, FHI 360, and USAID Washington participated in a call to discuss the MDA implementation.



Figure 1: A child taking medication during the MDA.



Figure 2: A beneficiary, M Fofana, relaying that the community has long understood the importance of the drugs distributed during the MDA.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 3: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Activity implementation under COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a contingency plan and SOP for activity implementation • Review the MDA process completely and change steps where risk may be higher e.g., pinning the dose pole to a wall or tree to avoid touching during the measuring. • Change the distribution strategy to house-to-house. • Social mobilization messages on MDA included COVID-19 prevention messages. • Developed the CMT with FHI 360 to monitor compliance with the COVID-19 barrier measures during field work. 	Resolved

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 5: FY20 Carry-Over Activities	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
Meetings of the NTD steering committee (one meeting): presided over by the Minister of Health or SG.						
PC-NTD technical working group quarterly meetings (One remaining meeting)						
MDA planning and FAA refresher workshop for six regions (Mamou)						
OV experts committee meeting in Conakry after validation of the elimination plan (costs to be shared)						
Meeting on progress towards Trachoma elimination dossier (co-funding with Sightsavers)						
Advocacy						
HKI participation in MOH strategic meetings						
Advocacy meeting with the new national assembly for NTD resources						
Social Mobilization						
Production of a documentary on LF/OV/SCH/STH MDAs						
National MDA campaign launch ceremony for LF/OV/SCH/STH MDAs in Kankan						
Production and use of MDA IEC materials (T-shirts, banners, caps) for use in 19 Act West-supported HDs						
Local broadcasting about NTDs on local radio in 19 HDs						
Town Criers for Act West-supported MDA in 19 HDs						
Mobile sound system for Act West-supported MDA in 19 HDs						
Broadcast of short programs and round-table discussions on local radio during MDA in 19 HDs						
Celebration of International NTD Day						
Training						
Refresher training of national supervisors on NTDs in Kindia						
Refresher training of trainers for MDA of 19 HDs and 6 regions						
Training of external MDA supervisors for 4 HDs						
Training of health center staff for MDA in 19 HDs						
Training of CDDs for MDA in 19 HDs						
Training for TIS/TSS surveyors						
Training/orientation of journalists on PC-NTD control in Coyah						
Training/orientation of parliamentarians on NTDs in Conakry						
Training of national trainers and survey teams on pre-TAS in Conakry						
MDA Coverage						
LF/OV/STH/SCH MDA in 15 HDs						
OV/SCH MDA in 03 HDs						
SCH MDA in 01 HDs						
Production of IVM dose pole						
Production of MDA management tools						
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision of LF/Oncho/STH/SCH MDA in 15 HDs						

TABLE 5: FY20 Carry-Over Activities	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Supervision of Oncho/SCH MDA in 03 HDs						
Supervision of SCH MDA in 01 HD						
Use of the supervisor coverage tools (SCT) in 19 HDs						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Investigations of the Severe Adverse Events MDA						
Pre-TAS LF in 4 HDs (Boké, Gaoual, Guéckédou and Mandiana)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of pre-TAS LF in 4 HDs						
Prioritized Functions						
Implementation of NTD activities through community health approach/platform in 2 HDs (Kindia, Telimélé) (HKI)						
Advocacy						
Advocacy meetings with the new parliamentarians for domestic resources mobilization for NTD and establishment of a network of parliamentarians for NTD control (HKI)						

TABLE 6: FY21 Specific Activities	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
Workshop for the development of the national NTD programme 2021 annual action plan (17 participants in Boké)						
PC-NTD technical working group quarterly meetings (four meetings per year and is co-funded by partners)						
Workshop to review MDA management tools in Kindia (as a result of Q1 activities)						
NTD Secretariat						
Support for communication, office supplies and maintenance costs						
Internet connection for a year						
Advocacy						
Advocacy meetings with mining companies for NTD resources (Boké, Dinguiraye, Sigui, and Kindia)						
Advocacy meeting with the MOH budget and finance department for NTD resources						
Social Mobilization						
Production of a documentary on LF/OV/SCH/STH MDAs						
Training						
Training of QI Coaches						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
2022 JAP quantification and completion meeting						
Procurement of TEO for FY21 Trachoma activities						
Storage of PC-NTD MDA drugs at Central Pharmacy of Guinea (PCG)						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TSS in 7 HDs						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of TSS in 7 HDs						



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020-September 30, 2020

MALI

Date: November 15, 2020

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of the Act to End NTDs | West Program, led by FHI 360 in partnership with Helen Keller International, Health and Development International, Deloitte, World Vision, Americares, and The AIM Initiative under Cooperative Agreement No. 7200AA18CA00011 and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALB	Albendazole
CD	Country Director
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
CHW	Community Health Worker
CNIECS	Centre National d'Information, d'Education et Communication pour la Santé (National Center for Health Information, Education, and Communication)
CSCOM	Centre de Santé Communautaire (Community Health Center)
CTC	Technical Coordination Committee
DGSHP	General Directorate of Health and Public Hygiene
DHIS2	District Health Information Software 2
DRS	<i>Direction Régionale de la Santé</i> (Regional Health Directorate)
DSA	Disease Specific Assessment
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
END Fund	End Neglected Tropical Diseases Fund
EU	Evaluation Unit
FARF	Field Activity Request Form
FTS	Filariasis Test Strip
FY	Fiscal Year
HD	Health District
HQ	Headquarters
INDB	Integrated NTD Database
INSP	<i>Institut National de Santé Publique</i> (National Institute of Public Health)
IVM	Ivermectin
JRSM	Joint Request for Selected <u>PC</u> Medicines
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MOH	Ministry of Health
MRTC	Malaria Research and Training Center
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
NTDP	National NTD Program
OMVS	<i>Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal</i> (Organization for the Development of the Senegal River)
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive chemotherapy
PNEFL	Le Programme National d'Élimination de la Filariose Lymphatique ou Éléphantiasis (National Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination Program)
PNLO	Programme National de Lutte Contre l'Onchocercose (National Onchocerciasis Control Program)
PNLSH	Programme National de Lutte Contre de La Schistosomiase/STH (National Schistosomiasis/STH Control Program)
PNSO	Programme National de Soins Oculaire (National Program for Eye Health)

PPMTNS	Projet de lutte contre le paludisme et les MTN au Sahel (Project to Fight Malaria and NTDs in the Sahel)
PSI	Population Service International
PZQ	Praziquantel
SAC	School-Age Children
SDPLM	Sub-Directorate for Disease Prevention and Control
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminths
TA	Technical Assistance
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
CDPFIS	Health Training and Information Planning Unit
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Mali, the Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | West (Act | West) program is funded by USAID through FHI 360 and implemented by Helen Keller International. World Vision (WV) and Deloitte are consortium partners through the Act | West program in Mali, working to improve health systems strengthening, sustainability, and facilitating multisectoral collaboration. In addition to Helen Keller, other partners such as Sightsavers, Population Services International (PSI), END Fund, and the World Bank (WB) provide technical and financial assistance to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (MoH) as part of the effort to control and eliminate neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). The MoH is responsible for implementing NTD control and elimination activities. The MoH structure includes a General Directorate of Health and Public Hygiene (DGSHP), 11 regional health directorates (DRS) and 75 health districts (HD). The DGSHP operates four programs that target five preventive chemotherapy NTDs (PC-NTDs): The National Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination Program (PNEFL), the National Onchocerciasis Control Program (PNLO), the National Schistosomiasis/STH Control Program (PNLSH), and the National Program for Eye Health (PNSO).

This report covers the program activities carried out during the second half of FY20 (April 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020), referred to as the “reporting period.”

The reporting period was marked by unprecedented changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the first reported cases in March 2020, the government of Mali responded by implementing a series of measures to prevent further spread of the virus, including closure of national borders and schools, prohibition on large gatherings and workshops, shortened working hours, and a nightly curfew. Following guidance issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and USAID, public health activities, including community-based surveys and mass drug administration (MDA) campaigns were postponed throughout the country. With technical support from Helen Keller – Mali, the MoH developed implementation guidelines, risk mitigation plans, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for safe implementation of NTD activities in the COVID-19 context. On August 10, 2020, USAID approved the restart of NTD activities in Mali.

Along with the COVID-19 pandemic, Mali experienced sociopolitical unrest during the reporting period. In August 2020, President Keita of Mali stepped down from his position following ongoing calls for his resignation. Though the situation in Mali has remained calm, the international community condemned the move, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) implemented sanctions against Mali, calling on the military junta to ensure a swift transition to civilian leadership. A transitional government has been tasked with organizing elections, and ECOWAS has now lifted its sanctions on Mali. In response to these recent events, USAID has called for the postponement of all activities in Mali, thereby putting a stop to the NTD activities previously approved to resume.

Despite these challenges during the reporting period, Helen Keller – Mali took part in several strategic planning meetings held virtually, such as the meeting of the NTD Technical Coordination Committee (CTC), two meetings with the NTD financial and technical partners, and a meeting to review the FY21 workplan activities. Helen Keller – Mali also conducted several workshops, including a workshop to develop and adapt the NTD messages for the 2020 MDA campaign in September 2020 and a workshop to configure all PC-NTDs key indicators in the DHIS2 platform in April 2020.

As part of the upcoming preparations to conduct transmission assessment surveys (TAS) for LF in Mali, Helen Keller – Mali supported the national NTD program to develop and finalize the two TAS protocols for TAS1 and TAS3, which were shared with and approved by FHI 360. Helen Keller – Mali also led a workshop to train the surveyors and supervisors for the planned TAS surveys. Helen Keller – Mali monitored the FY20 drug and diagnostics orders and participated in the receipt of the praziquantel (PZQ) and filariasis test strips (FTS), which were received at the central warehouse.

Certain key activities planned to start in October 2020, such as the MDA for SCH in 29 HDs, the TAS1 in five evaluation units (EU), and TAS3 in 11 EUs could not be carried out during the reporting period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and sociopolitical events in the country.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

Helen Keller supports the MoH in implementing its 2017–2021 strategic plan to combat NTDs through the Act I West program.

The activities carried out under the Act | West program help to control and eliminate the targeted diseases so that they no longer constitute a public health problem. Specifically, the program supports the PNEFL and the PNLSH within the MoH. The program collaborates with other non-government organizations (NGOs) working to combat NTDs.

In September 2020 of the reporting period, the Deputy Country Director, Mohammed Yattara, left the Helen Keller – Mali office to join the Helen Keller – Niger country office as the Country Director. Helen Keller – Mali is actively recruiting for a replacement Deputy Country Director.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Helen Keller – Mali staff were ordered to work from home throughout the reporting period. Act | West supported internet connectivity for the country office team to enable remote work.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

During the reporting period, Act | West supported the following strategic planning meetings and activities:

Work session in preparation for the FY20 TAS surveys

- Helen Keller – Mali participated in a working session at the DGSHP on April 9, 2020, to prepare for the upcoming TAS surveys and review the TAS implementation budget. In addition to the Helen Keller – Mali team (the Act | West program coordinator and the NTD monitoring/evaluation manager), participants included the PNEFL coordinator, a representative from the Malaria Research and Training Center (MRTC), and the DGSHP senior accountant. To prepare for the upcoming TAS surveys, participants recommended finalizing the TAS1 and TAS3 protocols, developing and submitting the implementation plan to the accountant one week prior to the start of the TAS field

activities, and ensuring timely submission of deliverables to the accountant. The participants suggested beginning the TAS training and surveys in June 2020, starting with the TAS3 in Fana and Dioila EUs, assuming that the status of the pandemic would allow these activities to be conducted. Finally, the partners advised developing a supplementary budget to cover barrier measures needed for surveyors.

Meeting of the NTD Technical Coordination Committee (CTC)

- Helen Keller – Mali participated in the virtual meeting of the NTD CTC on June 4, 2020, to develop strategies to implement the MDA and the TAS surveys in the COVID-19 context, monitor the status of the FY20 drug orders, and update the FY20 activity timeline in light of COVID-19 related delays. A key recommendation of the NTD CTC was to cancel all in-person MDA campaign launch activities, in line with the national guidance to avoid large gatherings. MoH participants included the NTD program coordinators, the head of the Sub-Directorate for Disease Prevention and Control (SDPLM), the head of the Documentation, Planning, Training and Health Information Center (CDPFIS), the DGSHP pharmacist, the DGSHP chief accountant, the representative of the National Health Information, Education and Communications Center (CNIECS), two MRTC representatives, and one representative from the National Institute of Public Health (INSP). The other technical and financial partners who participated included PSI, World Vision, OMVS, PPMTNS, and Sightsavers.

Meeting of the NTD Technical Coordination Committee (CTC)

- Helen Keller – Mali participated in a workshop with the CNIECS team at their offices on June 22, 2020 to update the messages and communication tools to include COVID-19 messages for the FY20 MDA.

Work session to develop MDA implementation guidelines in the COVID-19 context

- Helen Keller – Mali worked with the SCH/STH program coordination on June 25, 2020 to develop the MDA activity implementation guidelines for the COVID-19 context.

NTD NGO partners meeting

- A virtual meeting of the NTD partners was held on July 7, 2020 with technical support from Helen Keller – Mali. The participants from Helen Keller – Mali included the Deputy Country Director, the NTD program coordinator, and the monitoring/evaluation manager. The NGO partner participants included Sightsavers, PSI, and the World Bank's PPMTNS. The main goal of this meeting was to discuss the FY21 activities that the partners will support. During the meeting, PSI – Mali and the PPMTNS informed the partners that they will not be supporting FY21 NTD activities in Mali. Sightsavers informed the partners that they would offer partial support for the national MDA campaign launch for FY21, which would include per diem for participants to attend the launch, and the cost of banners and media coverage. Sightsavers will also cover per diem and fuel for

participants from Koulikoro and Sikasso to attend the 2021 national review workshop, as well as supplies and media coverage of the event. Helen Keller – Mali planned to support the FY21 SCH MDA in eligible districts.

NTD Secretariat

During the reporting period, Act | West covered the fuel and communications (telephone and internet) expenses for the national coordinators of the four NTD control programs (PNEFL, PNLO, PNLSH and PNSO) and for the pharmacist responsible for NTD drug management. Additional support for MOH NTD staff and Helen Keller-Mali key NTD staff working from home was also provided. This enabled remote meetings and discussions which were essential for continuing work during the pandemic.

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

No activities were planned during this reporting period.

Mapping

No activities were planned during this reporting period.

MDA coverage

No MDA was conducted over the reporting period.

Helen Keller provided technical support to the NTD programs to prepare the WHO 2021 drug order package. The package was submitted to the WHO country representative on April 14, 2020 for onward submission to WHO AFRO. Helen Keller – Mali monitored the FY20 PZQ order through email, telephone calls, and virtual meetings with the relevant actors involved to avoid poor coordination, which was a previous issue throughout the drug order process. The relevant actors involved in the drug order monitoring include the DGSHP pharmacist in charge of NTD drug management, the NTDP coordinators for LF, SCH/STH, Trachoma, and OV, the NTD focal point of the WHO-Mali country office, and Helen Keller country office and headquarters. Following the receipt of NTD drugs in Mali, the management of these are governed by the framework set forth in the National Drug Master Plan, in accordance with the NTD Drug Management Manual.

Helen Keller – Mali participated in the receipt of the PZQ shipment on June 23, 2020. The shipment of 4,400,000 PZQ tablets from WHO was stored at the MoH central warehouse. Act | West supported the production of 516 PZQ dose poles for all 35 HDs targeted for the FY20 SCH MDA. Helen Keller – Mali provided technical support for the pharmacist responsible for NTD drugs and inputs to conduct quality control of these poles.

TABLE 1: INVENTORY OF NTD DRUGS AND INPUTS IN MALI

	Inventory in the central warehouse as of 7 Sept 2020	Current inventory in the Nara and Djenné health districts	Quantity delivered to Koulikoro region
Albendazole 400 mg	2,285,400	0	0
Praziquantel*	5,995,000	376,000	867,875
Ivermectin	13,028,000	0	5,974,565
FTS **	28,440	0	0
Dose pole	416		100

* 464,000 PZQ tablets will expire on December 31, 2020, including the inventory in the Nara and Djenné HDs.

* 1,440,000 PZQ tables will also expire on January 31, 2021.

** FTS will expire on November 28, 2020.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

From September 15–17, 2020, Act | West supported the workshop to develop and adapt messages and communications tools for the FY20 SCH MDA campaign. The objective of the workshop was to strengthen key information, communication, and social mobilization in the communities through appropriate messages/support for the upcoming MDA campaign and TAS. Participants included MoH representatives (DGSHP, CNIECS, SCH/STH program coordinator, PNELF, PNLO and PNSO representatives; National Directorate of Social Development, and INSP) and NGO partners (Helen Keller – Mali, The Carter Center, World Vision, PSI and Sightsavers). Information regarding the COVID-19 context was incorporated into all messaging.

Training

With support from Act | West, Helen Keller – Mali conducted the TAS Surveyors Training Workshop on September 24, 2020 in preparation for the upcoming TAS surveys (TAS3 in 11 EUs/14 HDs and TAS1 in 5 EUs/15 HDs). The training was conducted in the large meeting room of the DGSHP to ensure social distancing was possible for attendees. The objective of this training workshop was to build the capacity of the TAS surveyors and supervisors on survey methodology, COVID-19 barrier measures, and use of materials and tools (paper and tablets) for data collection. The following presentations topics were included:

- A training module on TAS (materials required for TAS surveys, use of FTS and micropipettes, starting checklist for TAS surveys)
- A presentation of the study protocol (use of the positive control, reaching the required sample size for each EU, the target group of children ages 6–7 years; the list of villages and use of backup villages; the need to repeat the test for positives; the treatment of households with a single positive; and barrier measures against COVID-19 adopted throughout the survey, particularly at the child sampling table)
- A video on the packaging and use of FTS
- A presentation on trainers' personal experiences with social mobilization and use of FTS
- Verification of sampling equipment and packaging of FTS

- The use of tablets for electronic data capture with the DHIS2 platform
- Four surveyors from the northern regions participated in the training (two from Mopti region, one from Gao, and one from Kidal). Following the workshop, these surveyors were going to conduct the TAS3 in the Fana and Dioila EUs, however this has been postponed due to the suspension of activities. These investigators will implement the TAS1 in the EUs in the northern regions when activities can resume.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY 2020 (APR–SEPT 2020)

Title	Location	Target participants e.g., HCW, CDD, community)	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g. FHI 360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Training workshop for surveyors and supervisors on LF TAS assessments.	Bamako	Surveyors and supervisors	Strengthen the supervisors' and surveyors' capacities on the TAS survey methodology, Covid-19 barrier measures, and use of supplies and tools (paper and tablets) for data collection	Sep 24, 2020	Helen Keller	Strengthened participant knowledge of TAS surveys	23	4	27

Supervision for MDA

The planned SCH MDA was not conducted during this period.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

N/A

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

No DSAs were conducted during this period.

Following the TAS training workshop on September 24, 2020, Helen Keller provided support to the PNEF to send two teams into the field for the first trip on September 28, 2020 to conduct the TAS3 survey in two EUs (Fana and Dioila). However, the activities were suspended before the teams were scheduled to leave for the field due to security issues.

Dossier development

No activities were conducted related to dossier development during the reporting period.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

No short-term technical assistance was received during the reporting period.

TABLE 3: SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Scope of work (include only short summary)	Name of consultant/s	Period of consultancy	Status (completed, in- progress)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

The Act | West program supported the workshop to update the NTD integrated database (INDB) in Banankoroni from May 11–14, 2020. Participants included Helen Keller – Mali and representatives from the MoH, including the NTDP and CDPFIS. The goal of the workshop was to enter all the PC-NTD 2019 data into the INDB. Protective and social distancing measures were taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Drug management

No drug management activities were carried out as part of the IR/S component of the Act | West program during the reporting period.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES

Develop NTD sustainability plan

Helen Keller – HQ held a team meeting with FHI 360 and Deloitte to discuss the possibility of holding the TIPAC training virtually. Participants agreed to hold an online training with the Helen Keller and World Vision – Mali teams and to plan the TIPAC workshop with the NTDP when the timing is more suited for it.

Helen Keller – Mali participated in four TIPAC virtual training sessions from June 11–July 23, 2020. Participants included the Helen Keller and World Vision teams from Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The trainers were members of the FHI 360 and Deloitte teams. The teams trained from the three countries will serve as in country facilitators during the next TIPAC workshops with the NTDP, with virtual support from Deloitte.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

N/A

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

Helen Keller – Mali and World Vision – Mali held a virtual meeting on August 13, 2020 to introduce the new Act | West focal point from World Vision to the rest of the Helen Keller – Mali team members and to discuss planned activities and challenges. The Helen Keller – Mali participants included the Deputy Country Director and the NTD team. World Vision – Mali participants included the director of operations and the new Act | West focal point. A World Vision – HQ representative also attended. The main points addressed during the meeting were as follows:

- Managing the Helen Keller/World Vision – Mali partnership (how to ensure excellent collaboration for FY21)
- Feasibility of holding the workshop by September 2020, to develop the roadmap for intersectoral coordination and NTD control and elimination
- Activities planned for FY21

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

Several measures were taken to ensure the safety of resuming NTD activities in the COVID-19 context. A risk assessment was carried out on COVID-19 transmission and efforts in-country to combat it. Situational reports were regularly updated and disseminated, detailing the latest epidemiological situation of COVID-19 throughout the country. With technical assistance from Helen Keller – Mali, the MoH developed guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOP) for implementing MDA and DSAs in the context of the COVID-19. These SOPs were shared with the Helen Keller – HQ as part of the process for resuming activities.

Internal documents, such as the field activity request form (FARF) was required for all Helen Keller staff to participate in MDA and TAS activities. Helen Keller – HQ also required that staff traveling to the field participate in an internal orientation process to review the SOPs, internal requirements for activity resumption, and USAID requirements. Helen Keller – Mali developed supplementary budgets to provide protective equipment such as hand gel for MDA and TAS, additional vehicles to enable better distancing for supervisors and those traveling to the field and acquired alternative funding for face masks.

The following SOPs were developed for MDA and TAS activities, respectively:

MDA activities

- Provide personal protective equipment (face masks and hydroalcoholic gel) to all distributors and supervisors
- All distributors and supervisors must wear face masks when conducting door-to-door distribution
- Use of hand sanitizer gel is required at the entrance of each location
- Distributors and supervisors must practice social distancing of at least two meters (the dose pole will be drawn on walls to avoid handling and the tablets must be placed on a clean, hygienic surface)
- Awareness-raising messages on COVID-19 prevention measures will be incorporated into campaign mobilization messages and broadcast on local radio stations
- Vehicles will transport a maximum of three people, including the driver; face masks must be worn during the trip

TAS survey activities

- Comply with the maximum number of three people per vehicle, including the driver
- Take children by family or household to the collection site to avoid large gatherings
- Limit the number of people at the sampling site to 10 if the family is very large
- Everyone at the sampling site must use an alcohol-based disinfectant, particularly parents, children, and members of the survey team
- All team members must wear masks during data collection in the field
- Provide COVID-19 protective material and fact sheets to the villages selected
- Comply with social distancing rules (at least two meters) at the sampling sites
- Create awareness within the communities about barrier measures to protect against COVID-19 during the survey
- Comply with standard biomedical waste management norms
- Always wear gloves when taking a sample from a child
- Ensure that the technician and child/participant both wear face masks that cover the face and nose correctly since blood sampling requires a finger prick that cannot be performed from a two-meter distance

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 4: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
COVID-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess risks and interventions• Develop guidelines and SOP• Develop supplementary budgets to comply with preventive measures	Resolved
Upcoming Expiration of FTS inventory (November 28, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct TAS activities in the maximum number of EUs• Send FTS inventory to other Helen Keller-supported countries where it is needed	Pending
Suspension of activities by USAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek alternative funding to carry out the activities• Await the issuance of an exemption to continue health activities from USAID	Resolved

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 5: FY20 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
National stakeholders' meeting and NTD annual review						
Regional review meetings – NTD MDA Campaign (Bamako and Segou covered by Act West)						
NTD Secretariat						
Building Advocacy for a Sustainable National NTD Program						
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
SCH MDA in 35 districts: Bamako, Gao, Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Segou, Tombouctou regions						
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities						
MDA sensitization messages broadcast						
Training						
TOT SCH MDA (regional level)						
TOT SCH MDA (HD level) – Act West will cover transportation costs, per diems, accommodation, office supplies, coffee breaks, and lunch						
Training of CHWs SCH MDA (CSCOM level) – Act West will cover transportation costs and per diems in Bamako, Mopti and Segou						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Drug transport from national warehouse to all regions targeted						
Drug transport from regions to distribution points (Bamako, Kayes et Segou)						
Supervision for MDA						
SCH MDA campaign						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS1 in 15 HDs (5 EUs)						
TAS3 in 14 HDs (11 EUs)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision for TAS1						
Supervision for TAS3						
Dossier Development						
Data security and management						
NTDs Focal point training for DSHI2						
Drug Management						
Develop NTD sustainability plan						
SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance						
Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms						
Workshop to develop the intersectoral coordination roadmap						

Table 6: FY 21 planned activities	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
NTD Secretariat						
Support to NTDP for operational costs (phone, internet, fuel) [HKI]						
Advocacy						
N/A						
Social Mobilization						
Broadcasting of national TV and local radio messages (HKI) (FAA#1)						
National MDA campaign launch (HKI) (FAA#1)						
Regional MDA campaign launch (HKI) (FAA#9-15)						
Production of T-shirts, caps, and fabric (HKI) (FAA#1)						
Disseminate mass communication messages during MDA (HKI) (FAA#1, FAA#5-15)						
MDA training of trainers – participation HKI at the regional level (HKI), [Kayes, Koulikoro and Sikasso] (FAA#5,6&8)						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Production of MDA data collection forms for IVM and PZQ (HKI)						
Mapping						
N/A						
MDA Coverage						
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision of MDA: SCH MDA in 12 HDs (HKI) (Integrated with OV MDA in 12 HDs – End Fund) (FAA#5,6&8)						
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS3 in 22 HDs/17 EUs (HKI) (FAA#3)						
TAS2 in 11 HDs/3 EUs (HKI) (FAA#3)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of DSA – Lymphatic Filariasis TAS (HKI)						
Dossier Development						
N/A						
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
National Consultant for LF Dossier Development (HKI)						
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Training workshop of the NTD focal points of the DRS on the reporting of the NTD indicators in DHIS2 (HKI)						
Workshop to update the integrated NTD database (CIND)						

Table 6: FY 21 planned activities	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
NTD drug quantification and WHO JAP completion meeting 2022						
Supply chain management and reverse logistics of PZQ and FTS (HKI)						
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING, AND HSS						
Governance Activities						
TIPAC data entry workshop (Deloitte)						
TIPAC data analysis, budget mapping, and financial gaps analysis workshop to support budget advocacy with MOH (Deloitte)						
Organize a TOR review meeting (for the multisector platform) with cross sector stakeholders for buy-in and sensitization of NTD multisectorial collaboration (WV)						
Advocacy to follow-up on Ministerial decree signing of the multisector coordination platform – (WV)						
Technical review meeting with key leaders in relevant health and other sector programs to review and advocate for strategic alignment and integration of NTDs in the respective and relevant strategies and policies. (WV)						
NTD Technical Coordination Committee Meetings and NTD Steering Committee meetings (4 ordinary sessions of the technical committee meeting and 2 extraordinary sessions; 1 day/meeting) (HKI)						
A workshop to reflect and develop a roadmap for the integration of the modules (PML morbidity and all CHS components) into the continuing education program, to engage health professional training schools for the integration of NTDs into pre-service training and in-service curricula. (HKI)						
Review and analyze current SBCC materials and messages for NTD integration with WASH, Malaria, Nutrition, MCH, and Education (WV)						
Advocacy						
Advocate for routine participation of a multisector coordination platform representative in MSAS strategic coordination and planning technical working groups (TWG) and other coordinating bodies as relevant. (WV)						
Other						
N/A						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						
N/A						
IR3: SCH, STH, SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES						
<i>Where integrated with IR1 activities, do not repeat here. Include them under the respective IR1 categories</i>						
Advocacy (IR3 only)						
Regional Advocacy Meeting (Segou) (FAA#1)						
Social Mobilization (IR3 only)						

Table 6: FY 21 planned activities	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
N/A						
Training (IR3 only)						
MDA Training of Trainers – Participation HKI at the Regional Level (HKI) (FAA#2,5-15)						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement (IR3 only)						
Transport of Materials and Drugs for MDA from Central Level to Regions (HKI) (FAA#2)						
Production of Dose Poles for SCH MDA (PZQ) (HKI)						
MDA Coverage (IR3 only)						
Supervision for MDA (IR3 only)						
Monitoring and Evaluation (IR3 only)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs (IR3 only)						
Short Term Technical Assistance (IR3 only)						
N/A						



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**HELEN
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FY20 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020-September 30, 2020

NIGER

Date: November 15, 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALB	Albendazole
APOC	African Program for Onchocerciasis Control
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CDD	Community- Drug Distributor
CSE	District M&E Officer
CSI	Center for Integrated Health (<i>Centre de Santé Intégré</i> in French)
DEP	Directorate of Studies and Programming (<i>Direction des Etudes et de la Programmation</i> in French)
DPHL	Pharmacy and Laboratory Directorate (<i>Direction des Pharmacies et Laboratoires</i> in French)
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DRSP	Regional Directorate of Public Health (<i>Direction Régionale de Santé Publique</i> in French)
DSA	Disease Specific Assessment
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
EU	Evaluation Unit
FAA	Fixed Amount Award
FTS	Filariasis Test Strip
HD	Health District
HDP	Health Development Plan
Helen Keller	Helen Keller International
HRA	High-risk adults
ICT	Immunochromatographic test
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
INDB	Integrated NTD Database
IVM	Ivermectin
ITI	International Trachoma Initiative
JNM	National Micronutrient Days (<i>Journées Nationales des Micronutriments</i> in French)
JNV	National Vaccination Days (<i>Journées Nationales de Vaccination</i> in French)
LANSEX	National Public Health and Reference Laboratory (<i>Laboratoire National de Santé Publique et d'Expertise</i> in French)
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MF	Microfilariae
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health (<i>Ministère de la Santé Publique</i> in French)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
NTDP	Neglected Tropical Diseases Program

OCP	Onchocerciasis Control Program
ONPPC	National Office of Pharmaceutical and Chemical Products (<i>Office National des Produits Pharmaceutiques et Chimiques</i> in French)
OV	Onchocerciasis
PCT	Preventive Chemotherapy
PDS	Health Development Plan (<i>Plan de Développement Sanitaire</i> in French)
PNDO/EFL	National Program for the Elimination of Onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis (<i>Programme National de Dévolution de l'Onchocercose et d'Elimination de la Filariose Lymphatique</i> in French)
PNLBG	National Schistosomiasis and Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis Control Program (<i>Programme National de Lutte contre la Bilharziose et les Géohelminthes</i> in French)
PNLMTN	Program for Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases (<i>Programme National de Lutte contre les MTN or PNLMTN</i> in French)
PNSO	National Eye Health Program (<i>Programme National de Santé Oculaire</i> in French)
Pre-TAS	Pre-Transmission Assessment Survey
PZQ	Praziquantel
RPRG	Regional Program Review Group
SAE	Serious Adverse Events
SAFE	Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial Cleanliness and Hygiene, and Environmental Improvements
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SCI	Schistosomiasis Control Initiative
SCT	Supervisors Coverage Tool
SPIS	Health Programming and Information Agency
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminths
STTA	Short-term Technical Assistance
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TEC	Trachoma Expert Committee
TEO	Tetracycline Eye Ointment
TF	Trachomatous Inflammation – Follicular
TIPAC	Tool for Integrated Planning and Costing
TIS	Trachoma Impact Survey
TSS	Trachoma Surveillance Survey
TT	Trachomatous Trichiasis
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID's Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) | West program, led by FHI 360 and implemented by Helen Keller International in Niger, supports the government of Niger to implement NTD control and elimination activities, in accordance with its NTD master plan. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic which slowed implementation of the scheduled FY20 activities, several Act | West-funded activities were carried out between April and September 2020. They include preparation for the trachoma mass drug administration (MDA) campaign, which started on September 30, 2020 and finished in early October 2020, as well as the development of trachoma and lymphatic filariasis (LF) protocols for surveys planned in FY21. During the reporting period, the Program for Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases (PNLMTN), with Helen Keller, prepared and developed the FY21 workplan. As usual, support from Act | West to implement the activities is primarily through fixed amount awards (FAAs) to the institutions responsible for NTD control and elimination: the PNLMTN, the National Eye Health Program (PNSO), the National Program for the Elimination of Onchocerciasis and Lymphatic Filariasis (PNDO/EFL), the National Office of Pharmaceutical and Chemical Products (ONPPC), and the regions targeted by the campaign (Diffa, Tahoua and Zinder).

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges in program implementation since the first cases were discovered in March 2020. Niger closed its borders, limited movement with a curfew in Niamey, and limited groupings of more than 30 people. Field activities—specifically, MDA campaigns and surveys—were suspended from April–July 2020; approval to resume activities was given in August 2020, after the submission of a document detailing the risk-mitigation measures and standard operating procedure (SOP) to be followed. As of October 24, 2020, land borders remain closed but international flights are operating to Niamey. There have been 1,210 confirmed cases in Niger, of which 16 were active cases in Niamey.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

Dr. Josette Vignon, the Helen Keller – Niger Country Director, left Helen Keller in mid-September 2020. Dr Vignon has been replaced by Mr. Mohamed Yattara, the former Deputy Country Director of Helen Keller-Mali. Mr. Yattara brings with him many years of experience in M&E as well as technical expertise in NTDs.

During the pandemic, Helen Keller – Niger staff were required to work from home. The office is now partially open and operating at 50 percent occupancy with the other 50 percent working from home.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

The Act | West supported trachoma MDA straddled the end of the reporting period and the start of FY21. For clarity, the table below shows the main activities related to the MDA and the dates of implementation (see Figure 1, below).

ACTIVITES	September					October														
	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Social mobilization (community radio and by CDDs)																				
Training of the heads of CSIs																				
CDD training																				
Zithromax distribution																				
Supervision of the distribution																				
HD level evaluation																				
Regional evaluation																				

Figure 1: Timeline of the trachoma MDA in Niger.

Strategic planning

NTD Coordination Meetings

After the approval to resume activities from USAID, the PNLMTN organized a coordination meeting, supported by Act | West, on August 19, 2020 at the PNLMTN offices to discuss the Act | West trachoma MDA. Participants included representatives from the Directorate of Studies and Programming (DEP - *Direction des Etudes et de la Programmation*), PNLMTN, PNSO, PNDOEFL, PNLBG, ONPPC, Pharmacy and Laboratory Directorate (*Direction des Pharmacies et Laboratoires* – DPHL) the school health division of the Ministry of Education, the World Bank, The Carter Center, World Vision, and Helen Keller. The main goal was to bring together the key NTD players to review the new COVID-19 guidelines and develop a new timeline for the trachoma campaign in the four districts that would be supported by Act | West. During this meeting, participants shared lessons learned from the World Bank-funded trachoma MDA (which distributed Zithromax and tetracycline ointment) conducted weeks earlier in four other districts. A recommendation was developed to address waste management throughout the entire campaign implementation chain to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19. This recommendation which was implemented during the Act | West supported MDA.

Annual Post-MDA Review Meetings at District Level

This activity has not yet been conducted. The four HD assessment meetings (Diffa, Bosso, Belbédji and Bouza) are scheduled for October 7–8, 2020, following the completion of the trachoma MDA.

Annual Post-MDA Review Meeting at Regional Level

The assessment meetings for the Diffa, Tahoua, and Zinder regions did not take place in the reporting period but are currently scheduled to take place from October 10–11, 2020.

Annual Post-MDA Review Meeting at National Level

The national assessment meeting did not take place in the reporting period but is scheduled for quarter 1 of FY21.

Regional Planning Meetings (for the trachoma MDA)

With Act | West funding, planning meetings were held from September 7–8, 2020, in Tahoua for Bouza HD and the Tahoua DSRP, and in Zinder for Diffa, Bosso, and Belbedji HDs with the Diffa and Zinder DSRPs. During these two-day workshops, the budgets were reviewed by the HDs and regional representatives, under the supervision of the MoPH and Helen Keller. To ensure high-quality data, the training emphasized rigorous supervision and the active participation of data managers from the regions (Health Programming and Information Agency - SPIS) and districts. In view of the school holidays, a community-based drug distribution strategy was proposed and adopted. This planning meeting addressed the specifics of the Diffa context, including operating in insecure areas where the use of motorbikes is prohibited and the decision to replace motorbikes with rental cars, and strengthening the door-to-door strategy via a mobile strategy in all districts so that the community drug distributor (CDD) teams can access nomadic and hard-to-reach populations.

FY21 Work Plan Meetings

This year, the 2021 workplan was developed via teleworking in response to COVID-19 pandemic and the national orders to remain at home if possible. Virtual meetings were held with the NTD programs and the Niger Act | West team, with support from Helen Keller headquarters and FHI 360. The workplan was developed in accordance with the USAID technical flags and in accordance with the three intermediate results – IR1, IR2 and IR3 – of the Act | West program. Helen Keller, FHI 360 and USAID participated in checkpoint calls on July 1 and 15 to further refine the planned activities before submission of the work plan. The work plan was submitted to USAID on the August 27, 2020. The work plan was not approved during the reporting period.

NTD Secretariat

Act | West continued its support during this period with funds for internet services for the PNLMTN and PNDO/EFL programs and some key Helen Keller – Niger NTD staff. This has been especially important given the often poor internet connection in Niger and that for much of the reporting period, staff were working from home due to COVID-19.

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

Advocacy with regional governors

Due to the pandemic, advocacy meetings with the regional governors could not be held until the campaign activities launched in September 2020. The trachoma MDA was discussed during the meetings in these regions.

Advocacy Meetings at Health district Level

Before the trachoma MDA campaign was launched, a series of one-day information-sharing meetings was held on September 26–28 with local authorities, in the four HDs planned for the trachoma MDA (Diffa, Bosso, Belbedji, and Bouza). In addition to the district management team, participants included departmental prefects, mayors of communes, religious and community leaders, and Helen Keller staff. During the meeting, information regarding the campaign was shared with participants and the commitments and expectations outlined (including social mobilization at mosques after prayers, awareness raising with villages leaders and notaries, and awareness of the security difficulties in Diffa) to help ensure a successful drug distribution.

Mapping

Not applicable.

MDA coverage

The FY20 trachoma MDA campaign was planned for eight districts in the Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua, and Zinder regions; four (one full HD and three EUs from separate HDs) in June 2020 with World Bank funding (Guidan Roumdji, Mayahi, Damagaram Takaya and Dungass) and four others (three full HDs and one EU from a separate HDs) starting in late September 2020 with Act | West funding (Diffa, Bosso, Belbédji and Bouza), with the drug distribution starting on September 30, 2020. The campaign targeted 1,707,177 people in these eight HDs, according to the population data; 628,241 of these were in the four Act | West-funded HDs (three evaluation units and one entire HD).

Before starting the FY20 trachoma campaign, Helen Keller conducted a physical inventory of the supplies remaining from the World Bank campaign (based on a recommendation from the August 19, 2020 coordination meeting). The method used involved inventorying the quantities remaining in the HDs plus the supplies in the ONPPC warehouses in Tahoua and Zinder ONPPC to assess the remaining quantities of drugs. Following this inventory, the ONPPC positioned the drugs for the Act | West campaign following the provisioning plan proposed by the PNSO. In addition to the quantities remaining from the last FY19 administration campaign, the new supplies of Zithromax received on March 5, 2020 were added.

Thanks to the new staff hired by the ONPCC this year and the new vehicles for drug transport, ONPPC drug provision was completed within the required timeframe. Helen Keller supervised this activity in the four HDs and was thus able to correct any shortcomings noted. Regarding the other drugs, information was obtained from the PNDO/EFL, pending transmission of all data regarding these drugs. No problems were reported with drug storage. The post-FY20 campaign inventory will be conducted in November 2020, after the national assessment of the MDA campaign.

The MDA was implemented without major problems and in compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures as outlined in the SOPs and additional USAID conditions for restart, including two-meter social distancing and taking photographs and videos of the campaign where possible. In all four HDs supported by Act | West, there was population movement of the nomadic Fulani and Tuareg populations in Belbedji and Bouza, and displaced people in Diffa and Bosso due to insecurity in the area, resulting in increased populations in Diffa HD from Bosso HD. The ongoing security challenges in Diffa and Bosso HDs meant that health center staff and community drug distributors could only work from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Additionally, there were problems accessing the population of certain villages in Bouza, as many adults were working the fields during the distribution.

Complementary strategies were identified to address these population movements; specifically, redeploying the CDD teams from one village to another (some villages had a much reduced population due to ongoing insecurity and other villages had fewer inhabitants due to the population working in the fields far from the villages); conducting repeat visits with support from village leaders; and resupplying drugs daily from the district for the Diffa and Bosso district CSIs (to avoid terrorist looting of the CSIs and taking drugs and other supplies).

The following activities were carried out as part of the campaign:

- Post-campaign drug inventory in the World Bank HDs and the return of the remaining drug inventory to the ONPPC warehouses

- Inventory of drugs placed by the ONPPC in each HD so that the campaign can confirm that the drugs were placed according to the planned and required quantities. This process made it possible to correct gaps in drug availability; these inventories were supported by Act | West in order to avoid the expiration of Zithromax syrup
- Cascade training that incorporated the distribution guidelines, data collection (use of the new data collection sheet), and the use of the SCT and supervision checklists, including the COVID-19 monitoring tool developed by Helen Keller and FHI 360
- Media coverage via the Niger Office of Radio and Television (ORTN); the social media caravan (a three-prong strategy which involves meeting community leaders, door-to-door sensibilization of households, and the broadcast of messages via community radio stations); and town criers
- Strengthening close supervision at all levels and stages, emphasizing data processing, by involving the monitoring and evaluation officers
- Strict compliance with the door-to-door strategy and supervised drug distribution
- Strict compliance with COVID-19 barrier measures
- Community commitment to treatment and taking the medication
- Hiring independent local supervisors in Diffa and monitors in Bouza and Belbedji who provided support during supervision and the use of the SCT (this use of independent local supervisors will no longer support the SCT implementation)
- Holding daily feedback meetings to discuss observations and recommendations, with participation of staff from the MOPH, DRSP, HDs, independent supervisors, and Helen Keller
- Creating integrated information-sharing groups, such as a WhatsApp group (district, MoPH, Helen Keller, and independent supervisors)
- Daily monitoring of drug consumption to avoid stock-outs, redeploying drugs from one village to another based on need; and daily monitoring of treatment data by village and age range
- Conducting a mop-up in certain villages and neighborhoods if the SCT result is less than 16.
- Extending drug distribution in all districts from the five days planned to seven days
- Commitment at all levels (MoPH, DRSP and district) to high-quality distribution

TABLE 1: USAID-SUPPORTED COVERAGE RESULTS FOR FY20

NTD	# Rounds of annual distribution	Treatment target (FY20) # HDs	# District with insufficient epi coverage in FY20	# District with insufficient program coverage in FY20	Treatment targets (FY20) # PERSONS (1)	# persons treated (FY20) (2)	Percentage of treatment target met (FY20) PERSONS
TRA	1	4		0	628,241	550,287*	87.6%

*Preliminary data from the trachoma MDA (calculated after the MDA completed in early October 2020).

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

All communication and social mobilization activities scheduled for May 2020 were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These activities—in particular, those related to the trachoma MDA—were not carried out until September 2020, when authorization was issued to resume field activities. They include:

- Monitoring the production and broadcast of information and awareness-raising radio and television spots, as well as the ORTN broadcast schedule. All the spots were revised to include information on

COVID-19 prevention, including the importance of complying with barrier measures during the MDA to protect the health of all participants (health workers, distributors, and beneficiaries).

- Supervision of the awareness-raising caravans and the social mobilization activities in Bouza and Belbédji HDs. This supervision mission was also an opportunity to visit community radio stations and meet with “relais” mobilizers and several community drug distributors to assess how they are implementing face-to-face communication (what message they are using and how) and the communication materials used during the awareness-raising and information sessions. The time in the field provided an opportunity to create an image bank featuring the various MDA activities: training of trainers; training of supervisors; training of CSI directors; trainings for community relays and distributors; advocacy meetings; and distribution activities.

Training

MDA cascade training

Cascade training for the Act | West trachoma MDA was carried out in two phases and covered the MDA guidelines including the new Zithromax dosing guidelines, use of the SCT and use of the DHIS2 platform for integrating MDA data (regional and HD level only). Initially, the training targeted regional trainers, including regional directors, regional NTD focal points, regional-level M&E officers (SPIS), chief district medical officers, their focal points, and the Health District M&E Officer (CSE). The training for these regional trainers was conducted at two sites (Tahoua for Bouza HD and Diffa for Diffa, Bosso, and Belbedji HDs with the Diffa and Zinder DRSPs) by national trainers, including trainers from the programs and the statistics agency, with support from Helen Keller staff.

Next, the CSI heads were trained by the district trainers, under the supervision of the focal points and the regions’ SPIS, with support from Helen Keller staff. They in turn trained the community distributors. Tests were conducted before and after the distributors’ training (pre- and post-tests) to assess participants’ level of understanding of the distribution principles. The training also included a presentation on the SOP, outlining preventive measures against COVID-19 and appropriate behavior by those involved in the campaign.

The following table shows the number of participants trained at each level through cascade training.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY20 (APR–SEPT 2020)

Title	Location	Target participants e.g., HCW, CDD, community)	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g., FHI 360, Helen Keller, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Training of trainers on MDA and SCT	Tahoua Diffa	Staff from DRSP, PNMLTN, SPIS, MCD, CSE	Provide a pool of MDA-SCT trainers at the regional level. Prepare the regional trainers to train the health center heads and for supervision.	September 12, 2020	MSP (Programs) and Helen Keller	The pool of regional trainers received training on campaign guidelines and distribution techniques.	6	0	6
Training for CSI heads	Districts (Diffa, Bosso, Belbedji, and Bouza)	CSI heads	Prepare the distributors' trainers Provide tools to the on-site supervisors.	September 22 to 25, 2020	MSP (DRSP+HD) and Helen Keller	The CSI heads were trained on drug distribution guidelines and techniques and on the SCT.	34	4	38
Training for drug distributors	CSI	Drug distributors	Improve distribution quality	September 25-27, 2020	MSP (HD) and Helen Keller		1,540	510	2,050

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY20 (APR–SEPT 2020)

TIPAC training	Online	Act West (Helen Keller and World Vision [WV] staff)	Provide the WV and Helen Keller teams the necessary skills to support NTD programs in updating TIPAC and analyzing data	June 9 -30, 2020	Helen Keller, WVI, Deloitte	Helen Keller and WV staff are trained on TIPAC to support the PNLMTN on its implementation	3	1	4
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Supervision for MDA

Supervision teams were created at every level of the health system to supervise campaign activities and help improve the results of the campaign and coverage. Supervision focused on all the campaign's drug provisioning activities, from cascade training to social mobilization, distribution, and data collection. The teams are composed of national, regional, and district actors; CSI heads; independent supervisors; and Helen Keller staff. Each district was supported by a mixed team (MoPH and Helen Keller), which worked with peers from the regional and district levels to create several teams. Supervision began on September 30 and continued into FY21.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Daily Data Monitoring

The use of the newly revised data collection tools made it possible to track coverage at the village level during the activities in this reporting period. Daily debriefing meetings were held and provided an opportunity to review coverage and SCT data by village and plan corrective actions. For example, teams of CDDs and supervisors were re-deployed to hard-to-reach areas or zones with insufficient coverage to boost coverage. The SCT was an important spot-check for supervisors to assess coverage in their supervision area. The PNLMTN used the new data collection tools (registers, COVID-19 barrier measures sheet, supervision sheet, and summary sheets) and implemented SCT and daily data monitoring for the FY20 campaign.

Supervisor's Coverage Tool (SCT)

The SCT was planned to be conducted on the third day of the MDA, planned for October 2020.

SCT supervision began in the field in the third day of the MDA and was conducted by all supervisors, including local supervisors (heads of CSIs). Overall, 41 supervision areas in the four HDs (7 in Bouza, 13 in Belbédji, 11 in Diffa, and 10 in Bosso) conducted the SCT. An action plan was developed immediately after the completion of the household surveys based on findings.

The SCT rates coverage as follows: good, inadequate, or indeterminate. In total, the SCT indicated that coverage was inadequate for only one supervision area and was indeterminate for 10 supervision areas meaning that, in total, 11 out of 41 areas conducted mop-up. The main reasons for the drug not being taken/offered was displacement in fields during the harvest period. Action plans had recommended to reinforce the social mobilization efforts (mobilizing CDDs and town criers) and redeployment or reorganization of the CDD and supervision teams in some areas to increase coverage, which was implemented during the MDA. Other findings were that communication materials should be reviewed because some beneficiaries were unaware of the reasons why the drugs were being distributed; these changes were made during the MDA. We should note that the COVID-19 context was not cited as reason for not taking/being offered drugs in this campaign.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

No DSAs were conducted during this reporting period. The PNSO had planned to conduct TIS in 11 HDs in July 2020. These will be rescheduled. Planned TAS2 in 13 HDs and pre-TAS in 11 HDs are scheduled for October/November 2020. Protocols were developed and submitted to Helen Keller and to FHI 360 (TIS, TAS2, pre-TAS) for approval and the TIS protocol was reviewed and approved by Tropical Data.

Dossier development

No dossier development-related activities were carried out during the reporting period.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

TABLE 3: SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Scope of work (include only short summary)	Name of consultant/s	Period of consultancy	Status (completed, in-progress)
SCT refresher	Benoit Dembélé, Helen Keller	28 August 2020	Completed

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Drug management

See **MDA Coverage** for information regarding drug management for the trachoma MDA.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES

Develop NTD sustainability plan

TIPAC data entry and analysis

Helen Keller – Niger participated in four TIPAC virtual training sessions, held from June 11–July 23, 2020. Participants included the Helen Keller and World Vision teams from Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The trainers were members of the FHI360 and Deloitte teams. The teams trained from the three countries will facilitate the in-country TIPAC workshops with the NTDP with virtual support from Deloitte.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

There were no post-validation/verification surveillance activities during the reporting period.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

Landscape and barriers analyses

In April 2020, WV elaborated a zero draft TOR for the multisector platform in Niger. The WV and Helen Keller – Niger team organized a review meeting for the TOR draft before engaging the NTDP and other coordinators. In August 2020, WV and the NTDP began preparation for the workshop to disseminate and validate the results of the landscape and barrier analysis and to develop a roadmap for multisector coordination for the elimination and control of NTDs in Niger. From September 1–3, 2020, World Vision, with support from Helen Keller-Niger, held the dissemination workshop of the cross-sectoral landscape and barriers analyses with representatives from the NTDP, WASH, and education ministries to identify opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration to sustainably control and eliminate NTDs.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, preventive measures have been taken during implementation of the activities. These measures are set out in the SOP document developed by the Niger program, in collaboration with Helen Keller and with support from Helen Keller headquarters. The document, which is presented at all meetings, lists the rules of conduct and the measures to be taken during implementation:

- Social distancing of at least 2 meters at all meetings (see Figure 2)
- Everyone (supervisors and distributors) must wear a mask: all CDDs received masks
- Handwashing with soap and water at meetings and during the drug distribution
- Strict door-to-door and household-to-household distribution
- Use of clean containers (such as bowls or ladles which were provided by households members) to administer and handle drugs in the households
- Use of clean containers/bowls
- Social distancing when using dose pole for measurement and hanging the dose pole from walls or trees to avoid touching it (see Figure 3)
- Development of new strategies for the mobilization caravan to avoid population gatherings (community debate, door-to-door awareness raising or radio debates).

There were no major issues encountered during the trachoma MDA related to COVID-19 and the barrier measures. Some reinforcing of proper mask-wearing was done along with reinforcing social distancing in the field.



Figure 2: Photo of supervisor training, maintaining social distancing and wearing masks



Figure 3: A child being measured for Zithromax dosing

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 4: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS		
Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Launch of activities delayed because of COVID-19 pandemic	Contingency plan, teleworking, SOP for the campaign	Resolved
Insecurity in Diffa area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local supervisors hired Work hour reductions for all (relais, CSI heads, supervisors) to 9 am-2 pm CSI receive drug resupplies daily 	Resolved
Population displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile strategy Redeployment of teams 	Resolved
Agricultural work (low coverage for population ≥ 15 yrs in several areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit sites Involve village leaders in mobilization Mopping-up after SCT for low-coverage areas 	Resolved
Inadequate GSM network coverage (delay in transmitting data), resulting in incomplete data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data reported by the supervisors, In certain areas, data reported at the end of the campaign, Daily feedback 	Pending
Other overlapping health program field activities (post-COVID-19 period and year-end)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoPH maintains priority list of field activities e.g. vaccination has higher priority than NTD activities 	Resolved

TABLE 4: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular contact with the MoPH to ensure planning for NTD activities and avoid scheduling conflicts and MoPH staff being unavailable. 	
Rainy season makes it difficult to access certain areas	- Use of motorbikes and carts	Resolved

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 5: FY20 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 21	O	Q1 N	D	J	Q2 F	M
Strategic Planning						
NTD Secretariat						
Support for the NTD coordinator and the PNDO/EFL (Helen Keller - Includes support for office supplies, communication)	X					
Support for the MoPH's Pharmacy and Laboratory Directorate (Helen Keller) (Includes support for office supplies, communication)	X					
MDA Coverage						
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities						
Training						
Training/refresher training for trachoma surveys (pending approval to re-start trachoma DSA)		X				
Training on pre-TAS and TAS survey methodology	X					
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Reverse logistics (Helen Keller)	X					
Supervision for MDA						
National supervisors (national NTD focal point, NTD coordinators and program team members) MDA distribution and conduct a final evaluation of the campaign	X					
Regional supervisors (from health and education sectors) will supervise distribution for health center managers and leaders in the different disease sectors	X					
District level supervisors supervise the health center level	X					
Heads of health centers supervise CDD activity	X					
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Annual post-MDA evaluation meetings district level	X					
Annual post-MDA evaluation meetings regional level	X					
Annual post-MDA evaluation meetings national level	X					
Pre TAS in 11 Health Districts		X	X			

TABLE 5: FY20 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY 21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
TAS 1 in 11 HDs		X	X			
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision for DSAs (Helen Keller)		X	X			
Dossier Development						
Data security and management						
Integration of NTD data in DHIS2 is ongoing	X	X				
Drug management						
Develop NTD sustainability plan						
SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance						
Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms						

TABLE 6: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
Annual micro-planning meeting (Helen Keller) - 2 days (FAA #1)						X
NTD coordination meetings (Helen Keller) - 1 day per meeting	X			X		
NTD partner coordination meeting (Helen Keller)				X		
Drug needs quantification meeting and validation of the implementation plan						X
Onchocerciasis elimination committee meeting (Helen Keller through End Fund, Act West)					X	
NTD Secretariat						
Support for the NTD coordinator and the PNDO/EFL (Helen Keller) (includes support for office supplies, communication)			X			X
Support for the MoPH's Pharmacy and Laboratory Directorate (Helen Keller) (Includes support for office supplies, communication)			X			X
Advocacy						
Advocacy meetings at the health district level (Helen Keller) (FAA#6-9)						X
Meetings with the regional governors (Helen Keller)					X	
Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) World Day celebration				X		
Social Mobilization						
National launch of the mass distribution campaign (Helen Keller) (FAA#1)						X

TABLE 6: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Development of TV and radio spots (Helen Keller)					X	X
Diffusion of messages on NTD prevention and MDA prior to MDA campaign (Helen Keller)					X	X
Community mobilization (Radio) before MDA at the community level (Helen Keller) (FAA #6-9)						X
Community mobilization (Criers, Relays) before MDA at the community level (Helen Keller) (FAA #6-9)						X
Awareness-raising caravans at the community level (Helen Keller) (FAA#1)					X	X
Training						
MDA training of trainers (Helen Keller)						X
MDA cascade training/refresher training (regional, district, health center) (Helen Keller)						X
Training of quality implementation (QI) coaches					X	
Training of HD QI-teams						X
QI district-team exchange and learning sessions (additional days to other activities)						X
SCT training (Helen Keller)					X	
Training on TAS 1 and TAS 3 survey methodology (Helen Keller) - regional sessions (FAA#3 and 4 within the survey budget)					X	
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Drug storage, security, and logistics monitoring (Helen Keller)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Drug storage, packaging, and delivery by ONPPC (FAA#5)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Transport of materials and drugs for MDA from district to distribution sites (Helen Keller) (FAA#6-9)					X	X
Mapping						
N/A						
MDA Coverage						
Drug distribution in 8 HDs (trachoma MDA) (Includes advocacy, social mobilization, training, supervision) (FAA#6,7,8,9)						X
Production of tools (registers, synthesis register, dose poles) (Helen Keller)				X	X	
Purchase of COVID-19 protection supplies for MDA				X	X	
MDA Supervision						
National supervisors (national NTD focal point, NTD coordinators and program team members, health education office) will supervise preparation meetings, trainings of						X

TABLE 6: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
health center heads, MDA distribution and conduct a final evaluation of the campaign (Helen Keller) (FAA#1)						
Regional supervisors (from health and education sectors) will supervise training and distribution for health center managers and leaders in the different disease sectors (Helen Keller) (FAA#6-9)						X
District level supervisors supervise the health center level (Helen Keller) (FAA#6-9)						X
Heads of health centers supervise CDD activity (Helen Keller) (FAA#6-9)						X
Monitoring and Evaluation						
TAS1 in 11 HDs (FAA#4)				X	X	X
TAS3 in 14 HDs (FAA#3 and 4)						
TIS in 3 planned HDs (4 EUs) (FAA#2)				X	X	
TSS in 8 HDs (7 whole HDs + 1 EU in the 8th) (FAA#2)						
Supervisor's Coverage Tool (SCT) survey (Helen Keller)						X
Procurement of survey supplies (FTS) (Helen Keller)			X	X		
Severe Adverse Effects (SAE) Monitoring (Helen Keller)						X
Monitoring of FAAs by Helen Keller staff						
Procurement of COVID-19 protection supplies (Helen Keller)						X
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision for DSAs (Helen Keller)		X	X	X	X	X
Dossier Development						
LF dossier orientation workshop (supported by Act West)					X	
Trachoma dossier orientation workshops (supported by the Hilton Foundation and Act West)					X	
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
Support for LF dossier orientation workshops					X	
Review and analyze current SBCC materials and messages for NTD integration with WASH, Malaria, Nutrition, MCH, and Education. (WV budget)				X	X	
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Put in place a system for data security /systematic storage of NTD data at the NTDP (Helen Keller)	X	X	X			
INDB data entry (Helen Keller)	X	X	X			
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND HSS						

TABLE 6: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Governance Activities						
High-level stakeholder technical meeting with key leaders in relevant cross-sector Ministries (specifically Secretary General and Directions of Programming) to review and advocate for strategic alignment and integration of NTDs in sector policies relevant for NTDs (WV)				X	X	X
Launch of the multisector coordination platform in Niger (WV)	x	X	X			
TIPAC data analysis, budget mapping, and financial gaps analysis workshops to support budget advocacy with MoPH (Deloitte)		X				
Prioritized Functions						
Strengthen collaboration with the education sector for the integration of NTDs into the school curricula - SBCC for School Age Children (WV)	x	X	X	X	X	X
Review and analyze current SBCC materials and messages for NTD integration with WASH, Malaria, Nutrition, Immunization, and Education (WV)	x	X	X	X	X	X
Advocacy						
Develop advocacy materials to support NTDP budget advocacy with MoPH and other government entities (Helen Keller/Deloitte)			X			
Other						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						
IR3: SCH, STH, SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES						
Where integrated with IR1 activities, do not repeat here. Include them under the respective IR1 categories						



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020– September 30, 2020

SENEGAL

Date: November 15, 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACMU	Agence de la Couverture Maladie Universelle (Agency for the Universal Health Care)
ADP	Access and Delivery Partnership
AFRO	Africa Regional Office (WHO)
ALB	Albendazole
ANSD	Agence National de la Statistique et de la Demographie (National Agency for Statistics and Demography)
BREIPS	Bureau Régional de l'Éducation et de l'Information pour la Santé (Regional Office for Health Education and Information)
CDD	Community drug distributor (known locally as <i>DC</i> , <i>distributeur communautaire</i>)
CDTI	Community-Directed Treatment with Ivermectin
CHW	Community Health worker (known locally as <i>relais communautaire</i>)
CM	Case management
CMU	Couverture Maladie Universelle (Universal health care)
CODEC	Collectifs des Directeurs d'École (School Principals' Group)
CS	Centre de Santé (Health Center)
CY	Calendar year
DCMS	Division du Contrôle Médical Scolaire (School Health Control Division)
DGSP	Direction Générale de la Santé Publique (General Directorate of Public Health)
DHIS2	District Health Information System 2
DLM	Direction de Lutte contre la Maladie (Disease Control Directorate)
DPE	Direction Préfectorale de l'Éducation (Prefectoral Directorate of Education)
DSA	Disease-Specific Assessment
DSISS	Division du Système d'Information Sanitaire et Sociale (Health and Social Information System Division)
DSME	Direction de la Santé de la Mère et de l'Enfant (Directorate of Maternal and Child Health)
ECD	Health District Management Team
ECR	Medical Region Management Team
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
EPIRF	PC Epidemiological Data Reporting Form (WHO)
EPS	Éducation Physique et Sportive (Physical and Sporting Education)
EU	Evaluation unit
FAA	Fixed amount award
FHI 360	(Trade name for Family Health International)
FTS	Filariasis test strip
FY	Fiscal year
GTMP	Global Trachoma Mapping Project
HCCT	Haut Conseil des Collectivités Territoriales (High Council of Territorial Communities)
HD	Health District (known locally as <i>DS</i> , <i>District Sanitaire</i>)
HSS	Health systems strengthening
IA	Inspection d'Académie (Schools Inspectorate)
ICP	Infirmier Chef de Poste (Health Post Head Nurse)
ICT	Immunochromatographic test card

IEC	Information, education, and communication
IEF	Inspection de la Formation et de l'Éducation (Training and Education Inspectorate)
IR	Intermediate result
IVM	Ivermectin
JAP	Joint Application Package (WHO)
JLS	Journée Locale de Supplémentation (Local Supplementation Day)
JRF	Joint Reporting Form (WHO)
JRSM	Joint Request for Selected PC Medicines (WHO)
LF	Lymphatic filariasis
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MCD	Médecin Chef de District (Health District Head Doctor)
MCH	Maternal and child health
MCR	Médecin Chef de Région (Health Region Head Doctor)
MDCEST	Ministère du Développement communautaire, de l'Équité sociale et territoriale (Ministry of Community Development and Social and Territorial Equity)
MEDD	Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development)
MEN	Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale (Ministry of National Education)
Mf	Microfilaremia
MFFG	Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et du Genre (Ministry of Women, Families and Gender)
MHA	Ministère de l'Hydraulique et l'Assainissement (Ministry of Water and Sanitation)
MSAS	Ministère de la Santé et de l'Action Sociale (Ministry of Health and Social Work)
NTD	Neglected tropical disease
OMVS	Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (Organization for the Development of the Senegal River)
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive chemotherapy
PGIRE	Programme de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources en EAU
PNA	Pharmacie Nationale d'Approvisionnement (National Supply Pharmacy)
PNEFO	Programme National pour l'Élimination de la Filariose Lymphatique et de l'Onchocercose (National Program for the Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis and Onchocerciasis)
PNEL	Programme National d'Élimination de la Lèpre (National Leprosy Elimination Program)
PNEVG	Programme National de Lutte contre les Bilharzioses et Géohelminthiases (National Bilharzia and Soil-Transmitted Helminths Control Program)
PNLBG	Programme National de Promotion de lutte contre les Bilharzioses et les Géohelminthiases (National STH/SCH Program)
PNLMTN	Programme National de Lutte contre les Maladies Tropicales Négligées (National Neglected Tropical Diseases Control Program)
PNLP	Programme National de Lutte contre le Paludisme (National Malaria Program)
PNPSO	Programme National de Promotion de la Santé Oculaire (National Eye Health Promotion Program)

PRA	Pharmacie Régionale d'Approvisionnement (Regional Supply Pharmacy)
PTS	Post-treatment surveillance
PZQ	Praziquantel
RM	Région Médicale (Medical Region)
RPRG	Regional Program Review Group
SAFE	Surgery, antibiotics, facial cleanliness, and environmental improvement
SBCC	Social and behavior change communication
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SLAP	Service de Lutte Antiparasitaire (Parasite Control Section)
SNEIPS	Service National de l'Éducation et de l'Information pour la Santé (National Health Education and Information Service)
SNH	Service National d'Hygiène (National Hygiene Service)
SNISS	Service National de l'Information Sanitaire et Sociale (National Health and Social Information Service)
STH	Soil-transmitted helminths
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TBC	To be confirmed
TBD	To be determined
TIPAC	Tool for integrated planning and costing
TF	Trachomatous inflammation–follicular
TIS	Trachoma Impact Survey
TR	Trachoma
TSS	Trachoma Surveillance Survey
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAD	Visite à Domicile (Home Visit)
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FHI 360 is leading implementation of USAID's Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | West (Act | West) program in Senegal. Act | West is supporting the Senegal Ministry of Health and Social Work (MSAS)'s National NTD Control Program (PNLMTN).

The Intermediate Results (IRs) for Act | West are as follows:

- **IR 1:** Increased mass drug administration (MDA) coverage among at-risk populations in countries endemic for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) that are treated with preventive chemotherapy (PC)
- **IR 2:** Strengthen country environment for the implementation and management of national NTD programs
- **IR 3:** Sustained MDA coverage among at-risk populations in endemic countries

Act | West funding for the country is from July 19, 2018, to July 18, 2023. This semi-annual report covers the period April 1, 2020–September 30, 2020.

Senegal reported its first case of COVID-19 on March 2, 2020. A state of emergency was declared on March 23, with suspension until June 29 of all field activities for health projects and programs not related to interventions against COVID-19. This has delayed the implementation of activities planned for the period under review.

Nevertheless, ACT | West implemented the following key activities during the reporting period:

- Development of the fiscal year 2021 (FY21) annual work plan;
- Development of protocols for pre-transmission assessment survey (TAS) in 14 Health Districts (HDs);
- Implementation of pre-TAS in 7 of the 14 HDs planned;
- Development of the protocol for the trachoma pre-mapping desk review in the Tambacounda and Kedougou Medical Regions (RMs);
- Development of the sustainability plan;
- Integration of NTD indicators into the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2).

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Lymphatic Filariasis—LF pre-TAS in 7 HDs

Act | West planned to conduct the pre-TAS in 14 HDs. However, the temporary suspension of the program due to COVID-19 only enabled implementation of pre-TAS in 7 HDs (5 HDs in the RM of Tambacounda and 2 HDs in the RM of Kolda). These took place September 14–24. The pre-TAS in the remaining 7 HDs will be completed by November 2020.

TAS1 in 3 HDs (3 Evaluation Units [EUs]) in the RM of Tambacounda and TAS 2 in 3 HDs (1 EU) the RM of Sedhiou were planned in FY20 and have been rescheduled for FY21.

Pre-TAS took place in three stages: 1) orientation meetings for the Medical Region Management Teams (ECRs) and Health District Management Teams (ECDs); 2) training of laboratory technicians and data managers; and 3) field investigation.

Orientation Meetings

FHI 360 organized one-day regional orientation meetings on pre-TAS in Tambacounda, Kolda, Diourbel, and Thies regions. The meetings aimed to engage the RM and HD teams for a successful pre-TAS. They also allowed the selection of one-off control sites according to World Health Organization (WHO) criteria.

Participants were members of the regional and district teams targeted for pre-TAS. The workshops also provided opportunities to discuss the COVID-19 context and preventive measures to be taken during the activity to protect workers and prevent spread of the disease.

Training of Laboratory Technicians and Data Managers

Prior to the pre-TAS, training was conducted for enumerators in the districts of Tambacounda, Koumpentpoum, Kidira, Dianké Makha, and Bakel (Tambacounda region) on September 14–16 in Tambacounda. Training was conducted for enumerators in the districts of Kolda and Vélingara (Kolda region) on September 18–19 in Kolda. In compliance with COVID-19 protective measures, the training in Tambacounda took place in a large departmental council room and brought together ten selected laboratory technicians (two per study district), five data managers (one per district), two representatives of the medical region, the national supervisors (five) and FHI 360 staff (five). Participants in the workshop for the two districts in the Kolda region included four laboratory technicians, two data managers, two representatives from the medical region, the national level representative, and three FHI 360 staff. Preventive measures against COVID-19 were observed across the board.

Field Investigation

In preparation for the investigation, awareness raising was carried out at site level by the district, the head nurse of the zone, and two *relays* living in the respective villages. This was carried out before investigators arrived at each site, enabling the village chiefs and opinion leaders to gain the support of the population. A list of participants was drawn up before the start of the investigation.

All participants were required to wear face masks. The village chief or his representative, the head nurse, and two community health workers (CHWs, or *relays*) were present for the investigation at each site. They ensured appropriate COVID-19 precautions were taken. CHWs took the temperature of each participant and ensured that all participants washed their hands with soap and water or applied hand sanitizer.

The investigations took place from September 17–23 in the Tambacounda RM and from September 21–24, 2020, in Kolda RM. (Preliminary results are provided below under Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, LF pre-TAS in 14 HDs).

Onchocerciasis

The national onchocerciasis (OV) and lymphatic filariasis (LF) elimination committee was unable to meet during the period due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Trachoma

In FY20, trachoma surveillance surveys (TSS) were planned to take place in two HDs (Touba and Saint Louis) in six evaluation unites (EUs), and trachoma pre-mapping desk reviews were planned to take place in the 10 HDs of Tambacounda and Kedougou RMs. Mapping surveys were then to be organized in any HDs for which trachoma baseline mapping was indicated.

During the reporting period, FHI 360 supported the Programme National de Promotion de la Santé Oculaire (National Eye Health Promotion Program, or PNPSO) to:

- Develop the protocol for the TSS surveys. This protocol has been validated by Tropical Data. However, the surveys did not take place because of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Develop the protocol for the trachoma pre-mapping desk review in the 10 HDs of Tambacounda and Kédougou. The protocol and questionnaire have been developed, and the activity is scheduled to begin in early FY 21.

Multi-disease Activities

Strategic Planning

- Workshops to develop and validate the NTD Master Plan for 2021–2025 of the Ministère de la Santé et de l'Action Sociale (Ministry of Health and Social Work, or MSAS)

FHI 360 organized several working sessions in June with PNLMTN, World Vision, and Deloitte via a virtual platform. The first session guided the PNLMTN team on the development process of the FY21 Work Plan and the USAID technical flags relating to the funding of priority activities for the Act |West program. Subsequently, other work sessions were held to identify activities relevant to the work plan. This process involved all other technical implementing partners—Deloitte, World Vision, and AIM Initiative—under the lead of FHI 360. The work plan for FY 21 was developed and submitted to USAID following several working sessions held with these partners and the PNLMTN.

- Participation in the MSAS's weekly NTD coordination meetings

Restrictions due to COVID-19 compelled the PNLMTN team to utilize virtual platforms. FHI 360 supported PNLMTN to use TEAMS as the main platform to conduct coordination meetings of the national program. FHI 360 / Dakar participated in these meetings, providing a channel to monitor MSAS decisions regarding its response to COVID-19 and to share the guidelines issued by WHO and USAID. FHI 360 worked with the national program to develop an action plan to catch up on field activities following lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions.

An in-person preparation meeting for the FY21 MDA campaign was held on September 11, 2020, at the Directorate for Disease Control (DLM). This meeting brought together the coordinators of the different NTD programs, the program assistants, and the staff of FHI 360. The purpose of this meeting was to identify activities to be carried out before, during, and after the MDA. At the end of the meeting, a checklist of activities was drawn up and roles and responsibilities were assigned to different people.

- FHI 360's participation in quarterly PNLMTN coordination meetings

FHI 360/ Dakar financially supported and participated in the quarterly coordination meeting of the PNLMTN on August 6, 2020. Participating units/organizations included the General Directorate of Public Health, the Directorate of Disease Control, the program coordinators and NTD focal points, the National

Hygiene Service, the Community Health Unit, the Division of Health and Social Information Statistics, the Directorate of School Health Control, FHI 360, World Vision, Enda Santé, Sight Savers, PATH, and Speak Up Africa. The first quarter activity reports of the NTD programs were shared. Participants discussed validation of a roadmap for evaluating the 2016–2020 strategic plan—which will lead to development of the 2021–2025 strategic plan. A timeline was drafted for both of these activities.

That meeting also provided an opportunity to work with the with the NMLTP coordinators to reschedule remaining activities in the FY 20 Work Plan.

- FHI 360's participation in the coordination meetings of the 11 RMs of the Act | West project

After a three-month break, the RMs resumed quarterly coordination meetings. In June and July, FHI 360 participated in the coordination meetings of the regions of Kaolack, Kedougou, Saint Louis, and Tambacounda through the Regional Focal Points (RFPs). In each of these meetings, the RFPs discussed plans to implement remaining Act| West program activities.

- Participation in the coordination meetings of the 44 HDs of the Act | West Project

During the period under review, FHI 360 RFPs participated in coordination meetings in the districts of Fatick (RM of Fatick), Saraya, Salemata (RM of Kédougou), Velingara and Medina Yoro Foulda (RM of Kolda). The RFPs discussed planning Act | West activities—in particular the pre-TAS surveys in the RM of Kolda (Vélingara HD) and the trachoma pre-mapping desk review in the districts of Kédougou.

- Coordination of the Act| West project team of FHI 360 / Senegal

FHI 360 organized a coordination meeting for RFPs on August 6–7 in Dakar. All 11 RFPs (seven with Act | West and four with The END Fund) were present, in addition to the FHI 360 staff based in Dakar. The objectives were to review the RFPs' activities with the assigned RM and HD; review and select the best success stories, interviews, and photos developed by them; and identify the challenges and lessons learned during their stays in the medical regions. The meeting coincided with the end of the RFP contracts, so it also provided an opportunity for RFPs to return FHI 360 equipment.

RFPs gave presentations on their activities. The Plenary included success stories, interviews, and photos, which were then compiled by the supervisors.

NTD Secretariat

- Internet subscription for the PNLMTN/DLM office

PNLMTN coordinators have been equipped with a portable hotspot, allowing them to access the Internet while working remotely.

- Mobile phone credit for seven PNLMTN/DLM personnel

FHI 360 continued to provide monthly telephone credits to PNMLTN coordinators.

- Maintenance and repair for DLM vehicles

In September, during the pre-TAS investigation in the Diankhe Makha district, a supervision vehicle from the DLM was damaged. The DLM was reimbursed for the repairs.

Building Advocacy for a Sustainable National NTD Program

FHI 360/Dakar worked with the PNLMTN on a plan to write a newsletter for the first half of FY20. On April 29, FHI 360/Dakar staff received online training facilitated by the Act | West / HQ communications team on developing success stories, interviews, and photo and video footage. With technical and financial support from Act | West, the PNLMTN organized a newsletter development workshop on June 30 at the Résidences Mamounes. It involved all the coordinators and their assistants, the National Service of Education and Information for Health (SNEIPS), the Directorate of School Medical Control (DCMS), and technical and financial partners in the fight against NTDs in Senegal—including Speak Up Africa (SUA), World Vision, and FHI 360. In working groups, participants developed a newsletter on the flagship achievements of each NTD program—demonstrating innovations, challenges, and prospects for the fight against NTD in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Senegal. The newsletter is being finalized.

MDA Coverage (reported in SAR 1)

MDA was held in December 2019. The results were reported in SAR 1.

Social Mobilization to Enable PC-NTD Program Activities

Target populations were sensitized in each of 14 sites one week before implementation of the pre-TAS surveys in the regions of Tambacounda and Kolda. In each site, the sensitization team included the district NTD focal point, the district Health Education Officer, the Head Nurse, and two CHWs from the respective health post areas. The teams met with the village chiefs to communicate the dates, targets, and approach of the Pre-TAS surveys.

Training

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY 2020 (April–September 2020)

Title of training	Location	Target participants (e.g., HCW, CDD, community)	Objective/s of training	Date	Lead organization	Key outcome/s of the training	# of participants		
							M	F	T
LF pre-TAS training for HD-level laboratory technicians and data managers	Tambacounda	Data managers and laboratory technicians	Train technicians on the use of FTS	Aug 14 – Sept 16	FHI 360	Technicians, data managers, and supervisors were trained in pre-TAS surveys and how to use FTS	13	8	21
LF pre-TAS training for HD-level laboratory technicians and data managers	Kolda	Data managers and laboratory technicians	Train data managers on the technique of collecting data by smartphones	Aug 18– Sept 19	FHI 360	Technicians, data managers, and supervisors were trained in pre-TAS surveys and how to collect data by smartphone	7	1	8

Supervision for MDA

No supervision activities were conducted during the reporting period. MDA was held in December 2019, and the supervision was reported in SAR I.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Support for the preparation of the WHO Joint Application Package (JAP)—Joint Request for Selected PC Medicines (JRSM), Joint Reporting Form (JRF), and PC Epidemiological Data Reporting Form (EPIRF).

FHI 360 staff supported the national NTD control program in filling the common drug request for the FY22 MDA. The treatment report for the 2019 MDA and the EPIRF—which integrated data from the Schistosomiasis assessment surveys and the TAS1 survey of Sédhiou—and LF morbidity data were also submitted. This drug application generated a total number of 1,227,999 albendazole (ALB) tablets, 6,596,788 cp of praziquantel (PZQ) and 2,068,328 cp of ivermectin (IVM) required for the FY22 MDA.

LF pre-TAS in 14 HDs

The LF pre-TAS was carried out September 17–23 in the Tambacounda region and September 21–24 in the Kolda region. A census of the participants was carried out. Two sites were investigated in each of the 14 HDs. In each site, a minimum of 300 participants were tested—achieving the objective of participation per site. FHI 360 collaborated with ESPEN Collect to collect and analyze the pre-TAS data. ESPEN trained the FHI 360 staff, who trained the data managers. The data were collected by smartphone and stored on the ESPEN Collect platform.

A total of 4,450 people over the age of 5 were tested; 4,435 tests were negative, 6 were positive and 9 were indeterminate. The six positive tests were found in 4 HDs: Koumpentoum (3); Tambacounda (1); Kolda (1) and Velingara (1).

Supervision for Monitoring And Evaluation and DSAs

From September 14–24, the National Program for the Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis and Onchocerciasis (PNEFO), the DLM, FHI 360, the RMs, and the district (representative of the Médecin Chef de District [MCD] and the district NTD focal point) supervised the pre-TAS surveys conducted in seven districts in Tambacounda and Kolda.

Dossier Development

During the reporting period, planned quarterly meetings for dossier development for both trachoma and LF did not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. These meetings have been postponed to FY21 as rollover activities.

Short-term Technical Assistance (STTA)

No STTA activities were carried out during the period.

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTD ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data Security and Management

- Data Security

No activity

- **HMIS Integration**

FHI 360 financially and technically supported a workshop (August 31– September 4, 2020) to select and integrate NTDs indicators into the national health management system (HMIS) – M&E Indicator Integration workshop. The workshop focused on agreeing on a list of indicators, standardizing the data collection forms and the calculation modes of NTD indicators with the District health management system (DHIS-2) which is the national data collection system platform the MOH uses in Senegal. This activity marked the first phase of the integration of NTD data in the DHIS2 and included developing parameters for both indicators and data collection forms.

Representatives from different NTD program coordinators and their assistants, the representatives of the medical region, the district chief doctors, the Directorate of Health Establishments, National Health Education and Information Service (SNEIPS), National Hygiene Service (SNH), FHI 360, and Sight Savers participated in the workshop.

The second workshop will be held from October 12–16, 2020, and will include staff from the Health and Social Information System Division (DSISS), representatives of the NTD program, and FHI 360 staff. This phase will give the DSISS team the opportunity to continue developing the parameters of the different forms for the DHIS2.

Drug and Commodity Supply Management and Procurement

Procurement of FTS for Use in Act | West-supported LF Surveys

FHI 360 has acquired 21,150 filariasis test strip (FTS) tests for the needs of pre-TAS, TAS1, and TAS2 surveys.

Procurement of TEO for Use in Act | West-supported Trachoma Surveys

FHI 360 procured 1,500 tubes of tetracycline (TEO) for the National Program for the Promotion of Ocular Health (PNPSO). The TEO will be used for the planned TSS surveys on trachoma when USAID gives approval.

Workshop to Adapt the WHO Standard Operating Procedures for The Management of Medicines for NTDs

From August 24–28, three FHI 360 staff participated in a workshop on the revision of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the management of drugs for NTDs. NTD program coordinators, assistants to the NTD coordinators, the DLM, WASH focal point, the National Supply Pharmacy, the Regional Supply Pharmacy (PRA) managers of Thies and Kaolack districts, the Chief District Doctors of Makacolibantang, Matam, and Louga were invited. Technical and financial partners in the fight against NTDs (FHI 360, Sight Savers, Access and Delivery Partnership (ADP/PATH, Enda Santé) also took part in the meeting. At the end of the workshop, all 11 SOPs shared by WHO were adapted to the local context.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES (IR2)

Develop NTD Sustainability Plan

Workshop for review and finalization of the NTD sustainability plan

Organized by Deloitte, the workshop to develop the sustainability plan took place September 22–25, 2020. Objectives were to: present the results of the PNLMTN self-assessment workshop conducted with the Maturity Model (MMS); identify the objective(s) pursued in each area of sustainability; and identify the priority activities and the resources needed for their implementation. FHI 360 coordinated support to the

Senegal NTDP with remote preparation for the workshop (through a series of calls) with the HSS team and Act | West technical assistance providers.

The workshop was chaired by the DLM. Participants from the Ministry of Health and Social Action included:

- General Directorate of Public Health
- Directorate of Planning and Statistical Research
- General Directorate of Health Establishments
- Directorate of General Administration and Equipment, Directorate of Disease Control
- Directorate of Laboratories
- NTD program coordinators
- NTD program assistants
- Community Health Unit
- National Hygiene Service
- SNEIPS, DLM planner
- DLM's WASH/AID focal point
- National Malaria Program (PNLP)
- National Supply Pharmacy (PNA)

Representatives also participated from the following ministries/other sectors:

- Ministry of National Education / DCMS
- Ministry of Water and Sanitation
- Ministry of Higher Education / UCAD Parasitology
- Ministry of the Environment/Directorate of the Environment and Classified Establishments
- Ministry of Economy and Finance
- Ministry of Livestock and Animal Production
- Ministry of Community Development
- Agency for the Universal Health Care (ACMU)

Technical and financial partners included: FHI 360; World Vision; HKI; Sight Savers; Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (Organization for the Development of the Senegal River, or OMVS)/ PGIRE and SUA.

The DLM underlined key points including (i) strengthening NTD program coordination and PNLMTN with other MSAS programs; (ii) holding thematic meetings with other sectors; (iii) positioning NTDs at the institutional level; and (iv) strengthening decentralized coordination of NTD interventions. At the end of the workshop, the Senegal NTD sustainability plan was developed and technically validated, and a timeline was defined for the next steps including: (i) finalizing the consolidated draft of the sustainability plan; (ii) developing the budgeted action plan; (iii) finalizing the narrative for the section on dissemination, limits, and constraints, and (iv) organizing the Political Validation and Dissemination Workshop.

Cross-sector Coordination and Integration with Existing Platforms

Participation in the Coordination Meeting Of Partners in the Fight Against NTDs in Senegal

FHI 360 organized a virtual meeting involving partners in the fight against NTDs on August 27. Representatives attended from the WHO Country Office, Enda Santé, SUA, Sight Savers, PATH, and World Vision. The WHO document, "Elements to be considered in the implementation of mass treatment, active case detection and population-based surveys for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic" was shared. After interesting exchanges from the different participants, the following decisions were made:

- The NTD partners' meeting will now be held every three months.
- The WHO country office will host the next meeting in November.
- WHO will share the latest recommendations on the implementation of field activities in the context of COVID-19.
- Sight Savers will share the risk assessment tool (RAMAtools) being filled out by beneficiaries.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

With the declaration of the first case of COVID-19 on March 2, followed by the state of emergency on March 23, the FHI 360 Dakar office has promoted remote working by relying on the TEAMS platform. Also, a system of rotational permanence—with the presence of only one staff in the office per day—was adopted. All the activities carried out during the period benefited from a mitigation plan to fight against COVID-19.

Activities to prevent and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic are being carried out by state authorities in a multisectoral manner. Protective measures include mandatory wearing of masks in public places, respect for physical distancing, and hand disinfection with hand sanitizer or regular washing with soap and water. During project workshops, two-meter spacing was maintained between participants. Hand sanitizer was placed in the room for regular hand disinfection by participants. Facilitators provided a reminder of the COVID-19 preventive measures each day before beginning work. Wearing of face masks was mandatory for all participants.

Wearing of face masks was also required during investigations. Hand sanitizer was made available to each investigative team and supervisors. The target group to be investigated was organized in small groups of no more than three people, along with technicians. Strict respect for physical distancing among participants and technicians was required.

Community stakeholders were identified to help organize survey participants. These actors were responsible for helping to ensure that all participants complied with the COVID-19 preventive measures. A handwashing device and a thermoflash were made available to the survey teams by managers of respective health facilities.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 2: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Implementation of the pre-TAS survey in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic	Involvement of health workers at the operational level and their devices (thermoflash, handwashing device, physical distancing)	Survey carried out with compliance of preventive measures against COVID-19 without exposing the population to risks
Restrictions on the implementation of COVID-19-related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use of the TEAMS platform ✓ Staff rotation system for office presence 	Pending

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

Table 3 shows FY 20's activities (carryover) to be implemented during Q1 et Q2 of FY 21.

TABLE 3: FY2020 Activities to be implemented in FY 2021 (Q1 and Q2)	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
Workshops to develop and validate the MSAS's National NTD Master Plan for 2021–2025		X	X	X		
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities						
Workshop to review and update all MDA forms and tools, manuals, social mobilization materials before the FY21 MDA (FY21 OV/LF/SCH/STH MDA is planned for November 2020)	X	X				
Monitoring and Evaluation						
pre-TAS in 7 HDs	X					
TAS1 in 3 HDs (3 EUs)		X	X			
TAS2 in 3 HDs (1EU)		X	X			
trachoma desk review	X					
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of pre-TAS in 7 HDs	X					
TAS1 in 3 HDs		X	X			
TAS2 in 3 HDs		X	X			
Trachoma desk review in 10 HDs	X	X				
Dossier Development						
LF elimination dossier training workshop				X		
Quarterly meetings to work on MSAS's trachoma elimination dossier				X		
Data security and management						
Workshop for integration of NTD indicators in DHIS2	X					

Table 4 shows FY 21's activities to be implemented during Q1 et Q2

Table 4: FY 2021 Activities to be implemented in Q1 and Q2 IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
Technically and financially support the organization of MSAS's quarterly NTD coordination meetings (4 meetings) (FHI 360 – fixed award amount [FAA] DLM)		X			X	
Financially support the DLM/PNLMTN and FHI 360/Dakar's attendance at quarterly coordination meetings of 11 RMs supported by Act West for MDA. (Attendance of one quarterly meeting in each RM over the course of the FY, for a total of 11 meetings overall; local Act West regional focal points are able to attend all meetings with LOE only) [Act West does not fund the organization of these meetings, which cover all health topics, not just NTDs] (FHI 360)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Workshop to draft Senegal OV elimination plan (FHI 360)						X
Workshop to develop LF MMDP Strategic Plan (5 days in Thiès) (AIM)				X		
NTD Secretariat						
Print copies of the 2021–2025 NTD Master Plan for dissemination (FHI 30)					X	
Mobile Internet subscription for seven PNLMTN/DLM staff (FHI 360)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mobile phone credit for seven PNLMTN/DLM staff (FHI 360)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Social Mobilization						
Production of IEC materials for 11 RMs and 38 HDs supported by Act West for MDA (LF and/or OV, plus SCH/STH as applicable) (FHI 360)		X				
Updating of radio and TV commercials for use during MDA (LFOV-SCH-STH) (FHI 360)		X				
Airing of commercials and shows on national TV and radio before and during MDA (LF-OV-SCH-STH) (FHI 360)		X	X			
Airing of commercials on local radio in the 38 HDs supported by Act West for MDA (LF and/or OV, plus SCH/STH as applicable) (FHI 360)		X	X			
Organization of a national MDA launch day (in a HD supported by Act West for LF and/or OV MDA) (FHI 360 – FAA DLM)			X			
Community mobilization strategy for MDA in 11 RMs, 38 HDs (those supported by Act West for LF and/or OV) (FHI 360–FAAs –RMs)			X			
Training						
Orientation of national trainers and supervisors on MDA (LF-OV-SCH-STH, in Dakar) (FHI 360)			X			
Regional-level MDA orientation and planning workshops in 11 RMs (involving RMs, PRAs, regional-level schools inspectorates [IAs], and HDs), for Act West-supported MDA (LF and/or OV, plus SCH/STH as applicable) (FHI 360)			X			
HD-level MDA orientation and planning workshops involving the health posts in 38 HDs for Act West-supported MDA (LF and/or OV, plus SCH/STH as applicable) (FHI 360)			X			
Health post level MDA orientation workshops involving community distributors and teachers in health posts of 38 HDs, for Act West-supported MDA (LF and/or OV, plus SCH/STH as applicable) (FHI 360)			X			

LF TAS1 orientation workshops at regional level grouped in 2 RMs, involving a total of 4 regions (RM + IA) and 11 HDs (HD + IEF) (total of 2 workshops, 1 day per workshop) (FHI 360)					X	X
LF TAS1 training for HD-level lab technicians and data managers from 11 HDs, grouped at regional level in 2 RMs (total of 2 trainings, 3 days per training) (FHI 360)					X	X
Multi-region workshops for FAA orientation and development for the 11 RMs supported by Act West for MDA, held in 6 RMs (total of 6 workshops, 2 days each) (FHI 360)		X				
Orientation of 11 Act West regional focal points (consultants) [including those mentioned under IR3 STTA] (FHI 360)		X				
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Procurement of FTS for use in Act West-supported LF surveys (24 pre-TAS, 11 TAS1) (FHI 360)				X		
Handling fees for transport of MDA drugs from PNA to PRAs in 11 RMs (within these 11 RMs: IVM, plus ALB and/or PZQ as needed, for 38 HDs; PZQ, plus ALB as applicable, for 11 HDs) (FHI 360)		X				
Support for 11 PRAs' post-MDA monitoring of MDA drugs in 49 HDs supported by Act West for MDA, within the 11 RMs (FHI 360)			X	X		
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
Printing of MDA forms (data collection, data compilation, supervision) for use in 38 HDs supported by Act West for MDA (LF and/or OV, plus SCH/STH as needed) (FHI 360)		X				
MDA for LF (+OV/SCH/STH as needed) in 34 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
MDA for OV (+SCH/STH as needed) in 4 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision of regional-level MDA orientation and planning workshops in 11 RMs (those supported by Act West for LF and/or OV MDA) (FHI 360)			X			
Supervision of HD-level MDA orientation workshops in 38 HDs (those supported by Act West for LF and/or OV MDA) (FHI 360)			X			
Supervision of health post-level MDA orientation workshops in 38 HDs (those supported by Act West for LF and/or OV MDA) (FHI 360)			X			
Supervision of Act West-supported MDA (LF and/or OV, plus SCH/STH as needed) in 38 HDs (FHI 360)			X			
Monitoring and Evaluation						
HD-level MDA data validation workshop in 38 HDs (those supported by Act West for LF and/or OV MDA) (FHI 360)			X	X		
Regional-level MDA data validation workshop in 11 RMs (those supported by Act West for LF and/or OV MDA) (FHI 360)			X	X	X	
National MDA data validation workshop (the RMs supported by Act West for both LF and/or OV [plus SCH/STH as applicable] MDA and for SCH-only and SCH-STH-only MDA) (FHI 360)					X	
LF TAS1 in 11 HDs (11 EUs) (FHI 360)					X	X
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Supervision of LF TAS1 in 11 HDs (FHI 360)					X	X

Dossier Development						
Workshops to support development of trachoma elimination dossier (2 during the FY21) (FHI 360)				X		
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
Act West regional focal points (consultants) in 11 RMs (FHI 360)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Technical assistance to update Integrated NTD Database (LOE only) (FHI 360)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Technical assistance to update MDA data collection tools (LOE only) (FHI 360)	X	X				
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
Workshop to review and finalize the draft of NTD MDA drugs management manual/SOPs to align the protocols with WHO guideline and national protocols (FHI 360)						X
Governance Activities						
Workshop on Tool for integrated planning and costing (TIPAC) data entry & financial gaps analysis to support budget advocacy (Deloitte)				X		
Meeting for political validation of the NTD sustainability plan (FHI 360)		X				
Support the MSAS/PNLMTN to hold twice-yearly meetings for the multisector coordination platform, to monitor implementation of the NTD sustainability plan (WV)				X	X	X
Prioritized Functions						
Workshop with national stakeholders to develop approaches for routine and integrated deworming, drawing on experiences of routinization of vitamin A in Senegal and other national health programs (WV)				X	X	X
Support the PNLMTN to integrate NTD drugs into the National List of Essential Medicines (mainstreaming) (FHI 360)					X	
Support PNLMTN to hold a workshop to monitor implementation of cross-sector integrated services (Education, WASH, MCH, Nutrition, and Malaria) and activities for the SCH/STH control programs (WV)				X	X	X
Support PNLMTN to assess status of NTDs in existing pre-service and in-service training curricula (nursing and midwifery; medicine) (FHI 360)				X		
Review and analyze current SBCC materials and messages for NTD integration with WASH, Malaria, Nutrition, MCH, and Education (WV)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advocacy						
Support PNLMTN to advocate for the inclusion of NTD case management and related morbidities in the Universal Health Care (CMU) package of benefits and more specifically the free care package (WV)				X	X	X
Support NTDP to identify an NTD Ambassador to champion NTD priorities in Senegal in collaboration with implementing partners (WV)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support MSAS/PNLMTN to engage the local governance bodies (collectivités territoriales) for the inclusion of NTD-related priorities and services in their annual planning and strategies to further advance NTD sustainability and integration at the national and sub-national levels (2 pilot initiatives based on MSAS/NTDP criteria of selection) (WV)				X	X	X



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020- September 30, 2020

SIERRA LEONE

Date: November 15, 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALB	Albendazole
APOC	African Program for Onchocerciasis Control
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
CDTI	Community-Directed Treatment with Ivermectin
CHA	Community Health Assistant
CHO	Community Health Officer
CHW	Community Health Worker
CIND	Country Integrated NTD Database
CMS	Central Medical Stores
DHMT	District Health Management Team
DMO	District Medical Officer
DHIS2	District Health Information System 2
DPC	Disease Prevention and Control
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DSA	Disease Specific Assessment
EU	Evaluation Unit
FAA	Fixed Award Amount
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FHI 360	Family Health International 360
FP	Focal Point
FTS	Filariasis Test Strip
HD	Health District
HKI	Helen Keller International
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HSS	Health System Strengthening
ICT	Immunochromatographic test
IVM	Ivermectin
JRSM	Joint request for selected preventive chemotherapy medicines
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
MCHA	Maternal and Child Health Aide
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
mf	Microfilaria
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
NEC-ADR	National Expert Committee for Adverse Drug Reactions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
NTDP	Neglected Tropical Diseases Program
OV	Onchocerciasis
PCT	Preventive Chemotherapy NTDs
Pre-TAS	Pre-Transmission Assessment Survey

PHU	Peripheral Health Unit
PZQ	Praziquantel
SAC	School aged children
SAE	Serious Adverse Events
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SCT	Supervisor's Coverage Tool
SL	Sierra Leone
SLPB	Sierra Leone Pharmacy Board
SMM	Sustainability Maturity Model
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminths
TA	Technical Assistance
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TIPAC	Tool for Integrated Planning and Costing
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WA	Western Area
WAR	Western Area Rural
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WAU	Western Area Urban
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases | West (Act | West) program in Sierra Leone faced significant impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period. Starting in March 2020, the government-imposed restrictions in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19. The president of Sierra Leone declared a state of emergency on March 25. Following the confirmation of initial cases of COVID-19 in-country on March 31, the government of Sierra Leone imposed restrictions on all public gatherings and inter-district travels and closed schools, places of worship, and the airport to international commercial flights. In addition to the Sierra Leone government restrictions, the World Health Organization (WHO) released guidance on the implementation of NTD activities on April 1, that included suspension of field-based activities such as mass drug administration (MDA) and diseases specific assessment (DSAs). With the support of USAID, Act | West paused all field-based activities in accordance with this guidance.

As the COVID-19 cases appeared to be in decline in the July/August period, the government of Sierra Leone began to lift most restrictions and called for the reopening of schools (schools reopened in the beginning of October). Helen Keller International (Helen Keller) worked with the Neglected Tropical Diseases Program (NTDP) of the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) to develop a risk mitigation plan and standard operating procedures (SOP) for implementing NTD activities in the COVID-19 context. Upon review of the case study of the status of COVID-19 in Sierra Leone and the proposed risk mitigation measures for implementing MDA and DSAs, USAID approved the restart of NTD activities in Sierra Leone on August 17. Following this approval, Helen Keller supported the NTDP to mobilize for resumption of MDA and DSA activities utilizing risk mitigation tools and the SOP for implementation in the COVID-19 context.

The majority of the MDA and DSA activities planned for fiscal year 2020 (FY20) will be carried out in the October–December period, including drug distribution for the schistosomiasis (SCH) MDA; pre-TAS and TAS surveys; and MDA for onchocerciasis (OV) and soil-transmitted helminths (STH). Act | West supported refresher training of 536 peripheral health unit (PHU) staff and social mobilization at the chiefdom level targeting 1,273 stakeholders for the SCH MDA in September, prior to the school-based distribution scheduled for the week of October 12. The NTDP and Helen Keller supported COVID-19 protective measures during the training and social mobilization activities. Helen Keller also conducted enhanced community engagement activities in nine villages in the lymphatic filariasis (LF) hotspot districts where re-pre-TAS will be conducted in October. The activity identified key community influencers and channels of information that were generating rumors and hesitancy to participate in DSAs and/or MDAs that has impacted the program for years. These audiences will be targeted for sensitization prior to the DSAs and MDAs planned for the October–December period.

While field-based activities were on pause, the Act | West program in Sierra Leone focused on strategy and planning work that could be done remotely and/or following the in-country government restrictions. The community drug distributors (CDDs) census of rural populations in 14 districts was completed (the field work for this was completed during the FY20 SAR1 reporting period). The CDD census, along with urban population projections from the 2015 national census, will serve as a credible data source for future planning and implementation of activities.

Shifting consortium partner support to a remote format allowed for significant progress on sustainability and health systems strengthening initiatives while international travel to Sierra Leone was not possible. Deloitte provided remote support to the NTDP to complete the FY20 tools for integrated planning and

costing (TIPAC) data entry and analysis. This will help the NTDP to engage with MoHS, Ministry of Finance (MOF), and parliamentary stakeholders using data-driven advocacy messages throughout Sierra Leone's national 2021 budget process. Americares provided six remote coaching sessions on the MoHS inventory management processes for the NTDP Pharmacist and Storekeeper. The objective of the sessions was to build capacity of the NTDP on the MoHS warehouse management system. Furthermore, Americares donated drugs to manage adverse events during MDAs and commodities to support hydrocele surgery as Gift-in-Kind (GIK) donations to the NTDP. The value of the GIK is USD \$34,383. With remote support from World Vision and Deloitte, a draft NTDP sustainability plan has been developed. The plan includes strategic engagement objectives for domestic resource mobilization and budget advocacy activities and will be validated and disseminated in early FY21.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

During the reporting period, the NTD Coordinator position for the Helen Keller – Sierra Leone country office was filled by Mohamad Bah starting September 2020. The position had been vacant for most of the year, due to recruitment challenges early in the fiscal year. When COVID-19 hit, it was unclear how long the pause of field-based activities would be in effect, which slowed recruitment efforts. The recruitment of the position is critical to supporting the MDA and DSA activities that restarted in September, and Bah is well-qualified after completing a master's degree in epidemiology and serving as the M&E Officer and subsequently the Assistant NTD Officer for Helen Keller – Sierra Leone during the End in Africa program.

Act | West provided internet connectivity support to the NTDP (see NTD Secretariat) and Helen Keller – Sierra Leone NTD program staff for those working from home due to national COVID-19 protective measures. The connectivity support enabled remote coordination, reporting and monitoring of activities that were able to proceed while field-based work was on hold.

With the approval to restart MDA and DSAs falling towards the end of the fiscal year, the FY20 fixed-amount awards (FAAs) were extended through December 2020 at no additional cost to enable the program to restart activities more easily.

Helen Keller submitted a vehicle procurement package in July for a vehicle that was included in the FY20 work plan. Processing was delayed during the work planning period, and Helen Keller had to resubmit the package with updated quotes in September 2020, since the selected vendor's prices had gone up significantly from the original solicitation. The procurement package was submitted to USAID in October.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

FY21 Work Planning meeting

The fiscal year 2021 (FY21) work plan process began with discussions of program priorities in a virtual meeting held on June 12 with the participation of the key staff of the national NTDP, Helen Keller and FHI 360. One of the primary areas of discussion during this meeting focused on addressing redistricting and updated guidance on EU population targets with LF survey plans. It was agreed that starting in FY21,

LF DSAs would follow the guidance of creating EUs with populations of no more than 500,000. The recommendations and revisions suggested during the discussion were incorporated in the program priorities for the USAID checkpoint meeting which was held on June 18. The USAID checkpoint validation meeting was chaired by FHI 360 and included participants from USAID, FHI 360, and Helen Keller. The final workplan package (workplan narrative, appendices, and budget) was submitted to FHI 360 on September 24.

NTD Secretariat

Act | West provided operational support to the NTDP during the reporting period, including internet connectivity to enable staff to work from home effectively in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Act | West also provided support to the NTDP for the repair and maintenance of their vehicles for monitoring and supervision of activities.

Building advocacy for a sustainable national NTD program

Advocacy with Parliamentary Committee on Health

Deloitte and Helen Keller supported the NTDP to complete the preparations for this activity, e.g., analysis of TIPAC data (see IR/S section below). The NTDP also gathered the contact details of the members of the Committee on Health to organize the advocacy meeting. The meeting itself has been pushed to the FY21 period of performance due to COVID-19. It will focus on sustainable options for financing and resourcing NTD activities.

Mapping

No mapping activities were included under the FY20 Act | West Sierra Leone work plan. Sightsavers planned to repeat a nationwide trachoma mapping as part of the ASCEND program, but this has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MDA coverage

The SCH MDA which was postponed in March 2020 due to COVID-19 has now been rescheduled to October 2020 following the reopening of schools.

The OV-STH MDA in 14 districts has been rescheduled to December 2020 due to COVID-19. The Ivermectin (IVM) for the campaign has arrived in country and it is expected that the Albendazole (ALB) will arrive prior to the MDA scheduled for December 2020 (the specific arrival date is still not confirmed).

During the reporting period, 19,313,500 tablets of IVM was received and transported to the NTDP warehouse in Makeni. The IVM will be used for the OV MDA scheduled for December. WHO has also indicated that the Albendazole for STH for school-aged children will be shipped by airfreight in November.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

“Refresher” social mobilization for SCH MDA was conducted in September 2020 to effectively restart MDA in the target districts (SAR1 details the SCH MDA which was halted due to COVID-19 in March before distribution could happen). In addition to the typical messaging around the safety and necessity of the MDA, the refresher social mobilization was an opportunity to sensitize the target audience to the

COVID-19 protective measures that would be practiced during the MDA. COVID-19 protective measures were also practiced during the social mobilization activities in accordance with the SOP on MDA implementation in the COVID-19 context. The refresher mobilization was carried out in 67 chiefdoms in nine districts targeting 1,273 stakeholders such as religious leaders, paramount chiefs, civil society heads, market women, section chiefs, town chiefs, councilors, and head teachers. Paramount chiefs are the traditional heads of the chiefdoms and their inclusion is crucial to the success of any program. Women and youth groups (market women, bike riders) were also targeted to enhance participation in the MDA. Radio discussion programs using community radios were part of the social mobilization strategies and communication channels to increase awareness of the SCH MDA campaign and encourage participation.

Training

Please refer to the SCH/STH Surveillance section for information on the MDA training included in the table below.

Enhanced Community Engagement Training

In preparation for a rapid assessment on enhanced community engagement in nine villages (LF hotspot districts) where pre-TAS will be conducted in October and OV MDA will be conducted in December, Helen Keller and the national-level NTDP staff received remote training on enhanced community engagement. The training was facilitated by Dr. Luisa Enria, Anthropologist, and Angus Fayia Tengbeh, Social Scientist from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The training covered data collection methods for focus group discussions, key informant interviews, rumor-tracking sessions, and participant observations.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY 2020 (APR-SEPT 2020)

Title	Location	Target participants e.g., HCW, CDD, community	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g., FHI360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Refresher training of PHU staff for SCH MDA	9 districts	PHU staff	To train PHU staff on SCH MDA strategy and data collection tools; to train PHU staff on supervisor's checklist and SOP for MDA implementation in the COVID-19 context	Sep 22-25	Helen Keller	PHU staff knowledge on SCH MDA increased. PHU staff capable of conducting MDA in accordance with standard MDA protocols, along with COVID-19 SOP.	54	48 2	53 6
Training on enhance community engagement	4 districts	Helen Keller and NTDP staff	To train Helen Keller and NTDP staff on data collection methods/tools on enhanced community engagement	Aug 21-26	Helen Keller	Trainees knowledgeable on various methods on qualitative data collection	10	7	17

Supervision for MDA

No MDA was conducted during the reporting period. The FY20 SCH MDA is planned for October and the FY20 OV and STH MDA are planned for December. Prior to each campaign, supervisors will be oriented to the supervisor checklist and SOP for implementing MDA in the COVID-19 context. As noted above, this orientation has already been done for the SCH MDA.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Holistic review of MDA checklists

During the reporting period, a holistic review of MDA checklists was conducted as part of the quality improvement process. All MDA materials and tools were compiled and reviewed. Additionally, Sierra Leone finalized the indicator values for the FY20 Quality Improvement activities, which can be made available upon request.

Community drug distributors (CDDs) census data

Following the rural population census carried out by CDDs all 14 districts (carried out in the previous reporting period), the data was collated and analyzed by Helen Keller and NTDP monitoring and

evaluation officers. The updated CDD census population is now available at district and sub-district levels. The population projections for rural settings from the CDD census has been combined with the urban population projections from 2015 census data to serve as a credible data source for future planning and activity implementation by the MoHS and implementing partners.

Joint Application Package (JAP)

During the reporting period, Helen Keller supported the NTDP to complete and submit the 2021 Joint Application Package (JAP) to WHO. The latest CDD census data was used to populate the form to ensure data accuracy.

Enhanced community engagement

Helen Keller – Sierra Leone supported the NTDP to conduct a rapid assessment of enhanced community engagement activities as part of the quality improvement component in nine villages (in the LF hotspot districts) where pre-TAS will be conducted in October and OV MDA will be conducted in December. Data collection was carried out from August 27–September 7. The goal of this activity was to encourage community cooperation, mitigate fears of blood sampling and MDA, and counter misinformation in the context of COVID-19 and in preparation for the DSAs planned for October. During the rapid assessment, key community influencers and channels of information were identified that lead to false rumors, generating hesitancy among communities to participate in DSAs and MDAs. These community influencers and channels of information will be targeted for sensitization for the forthcoming pre-TAS and OV MDA. The following activities were conducted as part of the rapid assessment:

- 18 focus group discussions
- 18 key informant Interviews
- Nine power mapping sessions
- Nine rumor-tracking sessions
- Nine participant observations sessions

The results of the rapid assessment will be finalized in October and utilized in the sensitization activities for the pre-TAS and OV MDA.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

No DSAs were conducted during the reporting period. Supervision of the pre-TAS and TAS is planned for the end of October. Prior to supervising the DSAs, supervisors will be oriented to the supervisor's checklist and SOP for conducting DSAs in the COVID-19 context.

Dossier development

The training on dossier development to orient the MoHS and partners on the processes and the requirements for the templates was planned for August 2020 but has been rescheduled to FY21 due to COVID-19. It is anticipated that during the workshop in FY21, the NTDP will begin to populate the available survey and MDA data into the dossier template and devise a plan to gather the necessary information for the narrative portion.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

There is no STTA to report for the reporting period.

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

Helen Keller MEL HQ held several preparatory meetings with the country team to discuss data security needs and next steps. Damages to the power supply of a desktop computer purchased for the NTDP specifically for data management were resolved to ensure data security. The country integrated NTD database (CIND) was then successfully installed on this desktop and preparations are in place to work with the NTDP to enter historical data. Please refer to FY21 work plan for additional details.

Drug management

There were significant challenges in getting both IVM and ALB drugs shipped, as delivery clearance processes took considerable time. The NTDP was required to fill out additional forms and provide additional documentation for the clearance process. Getting the appropriate documents and filling them out was a lengthy process, with communications between the NTDP and drug donation programs/WHO being unclear. Helen Keller provided communications support and guidance on what the NTDP needed to do. Helen Keller is working with the NTDP and contacts at the WHO to expedite these processes in the future.

Inventory management coaching sessions

The Act | West consortium partner Americares provided six remote coaching sessions on the MoHS inventory management processes for the NTDP pharmacist and storekeeper and Helen Keller's NTDP sustainability officer. The overall aim of these sessions was to build the capacity of the NTDP pharmacist and storekeeper on the MoHS warehouse management system and understand that adopting MoHS processes will improve quality of inventory management, increase data visibility & accountability, and facilitate future integration with the MoHS.

Americares – Gift-in-Kind donations

During the reporting period, the Americares team identified drugs to manage adverse events during MDAs and commodities to support hydrocele surgery as gift-in-kind (GIK) donations to the NTDP. The donation includes surgical supplies and materials for hydrocele surgeries as well as antihistamines, oral rehydration salts, and Panadol, which will be made available to manage instances of severe adverse events during MDA. The Americares GIK Manifest Approval Form was signed by the NTDP Manager, Dr. Ibrahim Kargbo-Labour. The value of the products is USD \$34,383.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES

Develop NTD sustainability plan

Sustainability Plan

During the reporting period, an in-depth review of the NTD Sustainability Plan zero draft was conducted in a series of virtual discussions led by FHI 360 in coordination with Deloitte and World Vision. Feedback was gathered and incorporated into the zero draft. The next steps will include the development and political validation of the sustainability plan, which will be the basis of future sustainability activities.

TIPAC training sessions

Deloitte facilitated five sessions of remote support on the tools for TIPAC data entry and analysis for key NTDP, Sightsavers, and Helen Keller staff. The NTDP and Helen Keller updated the FY20 TIPAC with

USAID approved budget data and part of Sightsavers ASCEND data. The aim is to position the NTDP to build on last year's advocacy efforts and engage with MoHS, Ministry of Finance (MOF), and parliamentary stakeholders at the most influential moment in the national budget cycle, using data-driven advocacy messages to increase domestic resources for NTDs.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

Refresher training for 536 PHU staff for SCH MDA was conducted in nine districts. The trainings, which were facilitated by the DHMT and supervised by the NTDP and Helen Keller staff, covered key topics such as the overview of the disease, MDA strategy, COVID-19 prevention measures, M&E and data collection including practical sessions on MDA tally sheets, and other reporting forms and gender mainstreaming in NTDs.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

In May 2020, Helen Keller – Sierra Leone provided input on the draft TOR for the cross-sectoral coordination mechanism. WV collaborated with the NTDP and Helen Keller to host a virtual meeting with key stakeholders in June 2020 for further technical review before submission to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. These stakeholders were the Ministry of Water Resources, Environmental Health Directorate, Adolescence and School Health Program, Sightsavers, and WaterAid Sierra Leone. As of July 2020, the PNF TOR was ready to be shared with top-level management in the MOHS for endorsement by the Minister of Health and the Chief Medical Officer.

COMMUNICATIONS

NTD Non-Governmental Organization Network (NNN) Conference 2020

Two presentations were delivered by the Sierra Leone program during the NNN virtual conference that took place from September 8–10.

Sierra Leone's national NTDP Manager, Dr. Ibrahim Kargbo-Labour, participated in a workshop organized by FHI 360 on September 9. The theme of the workshop was *"Applying a quality improvement model to neglected tropical diseases program implementation: supporting programs in identifying keys for sustaining operations."* Dr. Kargbo-Labour spoke on the topic "Planning for Quality Improvement initiation in Sierra Leone/How to design your test of change."

The Helen Keller – Sierra Leone Country Director, Dr. Mary Hodges, was a panelist on a Deloitte-organized workshop on September 10. The theme of the workshop was *"The Value of Economic Impact Studies and What the Economic Impact Model Aims to Do."* A success story was included in the presentation about a woman with elephantiasis named Hannah Araba Taylor who, after taking the NTD drugs and managing her morbidity, was able to get her life back and become an NTD advocate.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

(actions taken to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on program implementation)

As noted earlier in the report, field based NTD activities were paused from the start of the reporting period until August. During that period, extensive efforts were undertaken to assess the COVID-19 situation in Sierra Leone and develop contingency plans for program implementation. The program was able to maintain progress of strategic planning and IR/S initiatives during the period through the use of

remote platforms; however, these activities were more spread out (e.g., TIPAC training that might have been done within a week's time with in-country technical assistance from Deloitte has been spread over several months of remote support).

To prepare for the resumption of MDA and DSAs in the context of COVID-19, the NTDP and Helen Keller developed risk mitigation plans and an SOP to guide step-by-step implementation of MDAs and DSAs. Act | West also created supervisor checklists to follow during MDA and DSAs, which were disseminated to the Sierra Leone country program. These documents have been shared with FHI360/USAID.

These documents were put into practice during the refresher training and social mobilization activities that were conducted in September. In accordance with the SOP, these activities required the use of face masks by the PHU staff, participants, and supervisors at all times (face masks were provided by the NTDP as needed). Training sessions were arranged to ensure that social distancing could be maintained, and Act | West provide soap and handwashing supplies.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

TABLE 2: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
Postponement of MDAs and DSAs due to COVID-19	Risk mitigation plan and SOPs developed to guide the restart of MDAs and DSAs.	Decline in COVID-19 cases and lift of restriction by the government of Sierra Leone. SCH MDA rescheduled for October; OV and STH MDA rescheduled for December 2020. DSAs rescheduled to October–November.
IVM and ALB delivery issues due to complicated/lengthy delivery clearance process	Helen Keller coordinated between the NTDP and WHO to clarify what documents/processes needed to be completed to get the drugs delivered	Partially resolved: IVM has been delivered; ALB is still pending. In the longer term, a solution to the delivery clearance processes is needed.
Vehicle procurement delay	Review of operational processes	Pending: the package was submitted to USAID in October.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 3: FY20 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY21	O	Q1 N	D	J	Q2 F	M
Strategic Planning						
NTD Secretariat						
Building Advocacy for a Sustainable National NTD Program						
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
MDA SCH 9 HDs						
MDA OV & STH in SAC 14 HDs						

TABLE 3: FY20 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY21		O	Q1 N	D	J	Q2 F	M
MCHA MDA OV-STH 14 HDs							
FOCUS1000 traditional healer & religious leader drug distribution							
Social Mobilization to Enable NTD Program Activities							
Social mobilization with students and bike riders							
Repeat social mobilization at chiefdom level for SCH MDA							
Social mobilization at community level for OV-STH 14 HDs							
Social mobilization at chiefdom level for OV-STH 14 HDs							
Pre-MDA cross border meetings							
FOCUS 1000 chiefdom level social mobilization							
FOCUS 1000 social mobilization in the fulani community							
Training							
Training & refresher training of CDDs							
Training & refresher training 14 districts PHU staff OV-STH							
Training of trainers integrated OV-STH							
FOCUS1000 training of trainers							
FOCUS1000 training of traditional healers, religious leaders on social mobilization							
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement							
Distribution of drugs and logistics for OV & STH in SAC 14 HDs							
Supervision for MDA							
Supervision of OV-STH MDA							
Supervisors Coverage Tool MDA OV-STH							
Supervision of SCH MDA							
Supervisors coverage tool MDA SCH							
Collection, analysis & reporting PCT SCH							
Collection, analysis & reporting OV-STH 14 HDs							
Monitoring and Evaluation							
Re-Pre-TAS in 5 HDs (WAR, Bombali, Koinadugu, Kenema, Kailahun)							
TAS 1 in 1 HD (WAR)							
TAS 2 in 1 HD (WAU)							
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs							
Supervision of LF re-Pre-TAS							
Supervision of LF TAS 1							
Supervision of LF TAS 2							
Dossier Development							
Data security and management							
Drug Management							
Develop NTD sustainability plan							
SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance							

TABLE 3: FY20 ACTIVITIES PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FY21				Q1		Q2	
	O	N	D	J	F	M	
Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms							

TABLE 4: FY21 PLANNED ACTIVITIES (Removed activities that will not be implemented in the first six months)	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
Annual NTD Review Meeting - FAA#1						
Quality Improvement using FHI 360 Model: 4 learning sessions, 2 days per session						
NTD Secretariat						
Administrative and vehicle maintenance support to NTD Program (NTDP) and National School and Adolescence Health Program (NSAHP)						
Social Mobilization						
Enhanced communication at national level through radio, television, social media, flyers						
Training - FAA#3						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Mapping						
MDA Coverage						
Supervision for MDA - (FAA#4-10,12)						
Monitoring and Evaluation - FAA#1						
LF TAS 1 (6 district) 6 EUs						
LF TAS 3 (5 districts) 4 EUs						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs - FAA#1						
Supervision of LF TAS 1						
Supervision of LF TAS 3						
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Integrate key NTD Indicators into DHIS2 (Helen Keller)						
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
Governance						
Remote TIPAC Data Analysis and financial gaps to support budget advocacy and program management improvement (Deloitte)						
Economic Impact Model Workshop to enable the NTDP to estimate the benefits of investing in NTD programming and interventions and, in turn, develop						

TABLE 4: FY21 PLANNED ACTIVITIES (Removed activities that will not be implemented in the first six months)	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
investment cases to advocate for domestic resources mobilization (Deloitte)						
Support the Partners Network Forum (PNF) to hold two (2) bi-annual meetings (WV)						
Support NTDP to develop a joint and targeted action plan with relevant sectors particularly school health, school feeding program (education), and environmental health (WASH) (WV)						
Advocate for routine participation of a PNF representative in MOHS strategic coordination and planning technical working groups, including DPPI planning and policy technical working group, and other coordinating bodies as relevant (WV)						
Prioritized Functions						
Support the NTDP to hold regional stakeholders' meetings for the integration of the NTD service delivery strategy into existing coordination structures at District Health Management Teams (DHMT) level (these include traditional healers and community-based structures). (WV)						
Review and analyze current SBCC materials and messages for NTD integration with WASH, Malaria, Nutrition, and Education. (WV)						
Advocacy						
Advocacy with Parliamentary Committee for Health for sustainability of NTDP building on planning work done in FY20 (Helen Keller)						
Resource Mobilization Advocacy TA to support the NTDP's advocacy meeting with the parliamentary committee on health - (Deloitte)						
Advocate for the inclusion of NTD services case management in the Essential Health Care Package in the Universal Health Care (UHC) rollout. (Helen Keller/NTDP)						
Meetings with the World Bank, UNICEF, and Directorate of Primary Health Care to integrate NTDs into training curriculum for community health workers (CHW) (Helen Keller/NTDP)						
Other						
Conduct a case study to investigate how NTD strategic planning, technical leadership, and coordination at the district level can be established in Sierra Leone building on other health programs experiences and best experiences at the community level (WV)						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						
IR3: SCH, STH, SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES						

TABLE 4: FY21 PLANNED ACTIVITIES (Removed activities that will not be implemented in the first six months)	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Where integrated with IR1 activities, do not repeat here. Include them under the respective IR1 categories						
Advocacy (IR3 only)						
Monitoring and Evaluation (IR3 only)						
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs (IR3 only)						
Short Term Technical Assistance (IR3 only)						



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FY 2020 Semi-Annual Report

Period covered: April 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020

TOGO

Date: November 15, 2020

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ARNTD	African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases
CAMEG	Central Medical Stores (Centrale d'Achats des Médicaments Essentiels et de Consommables Médicaux)
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
COGES	Health Center Management Committee (Comité des Gestion)
CNO	National Organizing Committee (Comité National d'organisation)
DAF	Directorate of Financial Affairs (in MOH)
DHIS2	District Health Information System 2
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DSA	Disease specific assessment
HMIS	Health management information systems
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IR	Intermediate Result of the ACT West Results Framework
IU	Implementation Unit
IVM	Ivermectin
JRSM	WHO Joint Request for Selected Medicines
LF	Lymphatic filariasis
LLIN	Long-lasting insecticide-treated bed net
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MDP	Mectizan Donation Program
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
NOEP	National Onchocerciasis Elimination Program
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
NTDP	Neglected Tropical Disease Program
OEC	Onchocerciasis Elimination Committee
Ov16 RDT	Ov16 rapid diagnostic test for onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive Chemotherapy
PHU	Peripheral Health Unit
PINTD	Program for the Integrated Control of NTDs
PTS	Post-treatment surveillance
QA	Quality assurance
QC	Quality control
SAC	School-age children
SAE	Severe adverse events
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SCM	Supply chain management
STH	Soil-transmitted helminths

STTA	Short-term technical assistance
TA	Technical assistance
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TIPAC	Tool for Integrated Planning and Costing
TF	Trachomatous inflammation – follicular
TT	Trachomatous trichiasis
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second semester of fiscal year (FY) 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent suspension, delay, rescheduling, and cancellation of program activities in line with WHO and MOH guidance. The government of Togo displayed good management of the COVID-19 response, and in mid-July USAID granted approval for FHI 360 and HDI to restart program activities with USAID funds. This allowed Togo to take a step further in efforts to eliminate Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). Two of the five NTDs for which Togo has been receiving funds from USAID show no more evidence of active transmission of infection (validation of lymphatic filariasis (LF) elimination by WHO was obtained in 2017, and the country's trachoma elimination dossier has been resubmitted to WHO). For the remaining three NTDs (onchocerciasis (OV), schistosomiasis (SCH), and soil transmitted helminths (STH)), program activities based on social mobilization, mass drug administration (MDA), and monitoring and evaluation continued to support control and elimination efforts.

In March 2020, teams began conducting OV impact assessment surveys planned for 12 districts in the Plateaux region. These surveys targeted villages known to have had persistently higher prevalence of OV and a random selection of other villages that have not been evaluated since 2015. However, these survey teams were recalled by MOH as part of the COVID-19 shutdown. After receiving USAID approval, Togo resumed the OV impact assessment surveys and completed them in all targeted districts, collecting 5,302 samples from 84 villages in Plateaux, while observing COVID-19 safety protocols.

The FY21 work planning meeting planned for June of 2020 was modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that restrictions were still in place and large group gatherings were prohibited, the work plan and budget development process, under the leadership of FHI 360, was conducted via a series of virtual meetings with PNMTN, FHI 360 and USAID, and Togo's FY21 work plan package was completed and submitted in July.

MDA preparation activities and MDA were also delayed, taking place four months later than scheduled. Meetings with village chiefs in high prevalence Oncho villages, which usually occur prior to MDA, were cancelled due to difficulty applying preventive social distancing measures. Pre-MDA training of supervisors, nurses, and CDDs took place as usual, after adjustments were made to rent larger rooms to allow social distancing. All participants were required to wear masks and use hand sanitizers or frequently wash hands.

The first round of OV/SCH/STH integrated MDA took place September 8–19, covering 36 districts for OV (3,261,347 people targeted), 34 districts for SCH (1,970,744 people targeted), and 39 districts for STH (2,084,188 people targeted). Due to delays in MDA, some post-MDA activities—including the rapid coverage evaluation to ensure that all targeted districts have been covered, and the subsequent collection of MDA-data and unused tablets to ensure good management of drugs before, during, and after MDA—were postponed to October 2020.

The rapid coverage surveys that Togo carries out after each MDA took place September 28–October 2. The Coordination team went back to the field to do a quick evaluation of the recent MDA. During this evaluation, the central team ensures that all targeted districts were treated. If any settings were left out, they proceed to treat them.

PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

IR1: INCREASED MDA COVERAGE AMONG AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN ENDEMIC COUNTRIES PROGRESS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning

Due to COVID-19, most activities in this category were either cancelled or postponed to FY21.

Work plan meeting

Given that restrictions were still in place and large group gatherings were prohibited, the work plan and budget development process, under the leadership of FHI 360, was conducted via a series of virtual meetings with PNMTN, FHI 360 and USAID, and Togo's FY21 work plan package was completed and submitted in July.

Onchocerciasis Elimination Committee Support

The OV elimination committee meeting (local experts) was cancelled due to COVID-19 and is tentatively rescheduled for December.

Strategic planning meeting for 2021-2026

The 2021–2026 Strategic Plan development meetings planned for FY20 were canceled due to COVID-19; they have been budgeted for FY21 and re-scheduled for March 2021.

SCH/STH Steering Committee meeting

The STH + SCH Steering Committee meeting was postponed due to COVID-19; it has been budgeted under FY21 and is tentatively scheduled for January 2021.

LF and Trachoma elimination celebration

The LF and Trachoma elimination celebration was cancelled for FY20 and budgeted under FY21, since Togo is still waiting to hear back from WHO about the trachoma dossier.

Cross-border meetings

The cross-border meeting with Benin planned for the second half of FY20 (May 2020) was cancelled due to COVID-19 and has been tentatively re-scheduled for November of 2020. These yearly meetings take place in alternating countries and were supposed to take place in Benin during FY20. These meetings are to develop effective interventions for border areas, and collaborative M&E strategies. They focus primarily on onchocerciasis, with an emphasis on cross-border synchronization of ivermectin (IVM) MDA, sharing of prevalence data and program progress, and addressing problem areas. The FY21 meeting with Benin will take place in Benin.

NTD Secretariat

During the second half of FY20, internet subscription cost was paid for PNMTN office as usual. Some unplanned expenses were paid to acquire USB WiFi "keys" to allow internet access for the PNMTN team and Togo HDI staff while working from home. After Togo was approved to re-start activities, other unplanned expenses arose, such as purchase of masks and hand sanitizer for HDI staff, students participating in Onchocerciasis surveys, and HDI office visitors.

Mapping

Mapping for all infections is complete, and no further mapping was planned for FY20.

MDA coverage

WHO received and cleared the Ivermectin (IVM), Praziquantel (PZQ), and Albendazole (ALB) for Togo's first round of MDA, which were delivered to PNMTN in August and dispatched to all of Togo's regions in preparation of first round integrated MDA.

The first round OV/SCH/STH MDA—covering 36 districts for OV with a target of 3,261,347 people; 34 districts for SCH with a target of 1,970,744 people; and 39 districts for STH with a target of 2,084,188 people—initially planned for May of 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19. Upon receiving USAID approval to re-start activities, the MDA took place from September 8–19. The PNMTN is currently in the field to conduct post-MDA rapid coverage surveys as this SAR is being written. Coverage data and unused tablets will not be collected until after post-MDA surveys are complete. Coverage data are therefore not available for inclusion in this report; these data will be provided as soon as they become available.

Social mobilization to enable PC-NTD program activities

The success of all MDA efforts depends on the level of community participation. Pre-MDA social mobilization efforts included town criers, local radio spots, and educational flip charts, which have been highly effective for publicizing the MDAs in Togo. Religious leaders helped spread the word at religious services and in cult settings, and administrative authorities organized information meetings at regional, district and community levels. Togo's repeated success in attaining high MDA coverage attests to the efficacy of its social mobilization efforts. This quantitative information will be provided as soon as MDA data are available

Training

Several trainings took place for activities that were able to restart during the reporting period. Pre-MDA refresher trainings took place in August for nurses, supervisors, and CDDs in preparation for the first round integrated MDA. The training/re-training of peripheral health unit nurses took place August 24–25. A total of 720 regional and district nurses were trained, including 79 women and 641 men. Among the women, 61 supervisors had previously been trained and 18 are new. Among the men, 552 had been trained previously and 81 are new. The regional and district supervisors training took place from August 17–21. Ninety (90) regional and district supervisors were trained, including 85 men and 5 women. All 5 women had been supervisors in previous years, while among the men, 71 were experienced and 14 were new. In addition, CDD training took place on September 3–4. A total of 12,772 drug distributors were trained, including 9,626 men and 3,146 women. Among the men, 8,225 were previous distributors, and 1,401 new; among the women, 2,340 were previously CDDs and 806 new. Finally, a training for technicians took place prior to the OV impact assessment surveys in March of 2020, but these were not reported in SAR 1. During the training, 33 technicians were trained (2 women and 31 men).

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACHIEVED IN FY20 (APR–SEPT 2020)

Title	location	Target participants e.g., HCW, CDD, community)	Objective/s	Date	Lead organization (e.g., FHI 360, HKI, HDI, WVI, Deloitte)	Key outcome/s	# of participants		
							M	F	T
Training of Oncho field workers		Oncho field workers	Train field workers for surveys	03/20	HDI and NTDP	Technicians trained for OV surveys	31	2	33
Training of regional and district supervisors		Regional and district supervisors	Train regional and district Supervisors on MDA supervision	08/17 to 08/21	HDI and NTDP	Regional and district supervisors trained	85	5	90
Training of nurses		Nurses	Train nurses on MDA supervision	08/24 to 08/25	HDI and NTDP	Nurses trained	641	79	720
Training of CDDs		CDDs	Training on MDA fundamentals	9/3 – 9/4	HDI and NTDP	CDDs trained	9626	3146	12772

Supervision for MDA

As for past MDAs, MDA supervision was organized at all levels. A total of 90 regional and district supervisors, 720 nurses who are primary health unit supervisors, and 12,772 CDDs were trained to conduct and supervise MDA activities using the supervision guidelines. HDI also participated in joint MDA supervision with the NTDP.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

OV Impact Assessment

OV impact assessment surveys planned for Plateaux region in FY20 took place during two periods. The first period, March 15–21, was suspended due to COVID-19, with the survey teams called back to Lomé by the MOH. The second period was from July 27–August 3, after Togo was approved to re-start activities. All 84 villages from 12 targeted districts were surveyed, and dried blood spots (DBS) were collected from 5,302 children. All personnel from Togo’s MOH were provided PPE and hand sanitizer, and HDI provided masks and hand sanitizer for HDI staff and surveyed schoolchildren (see photos). All lab technicians and supervisors wore masks and maintained social distancing when possible. Both technicians and children wore masks while blood samples were drawn from the children. All surveyed children wore masks and were placed in queue six feet from each other during the surveys. Every survey team used the available gloves and hand sanitizer during the survey.

Assessment of these villages will provide important information about the OV epidemiologic situation after years of Ivermectin MDA. UNICEF provided masks for MOH’s health personnel, and HDI purchased masks for its staff and surveyed children. Following the surveys conducted in Plateaux in FY20, Togo will have completed DBS sample collection for OV impact evaluation surveys in all five regions of the country. However, DBS samples collected during FY20 in Plateaux and during previous years in Centrale, Kara, and

part of Savanes still need to be tested at Togo's national INH lab. While INH lab technicians received a refresher training at USF at the beginning of FY20 and ran ELISAs on many samples from Maritime and Savanes, there is still a significant backlog of DBS. Samples from Centrale (4,192), Kara (1,100), Plateaux (5,302), and part of Savanes (3,347) still need to be run. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and INH lab personnel being fully engaged in running Togo's COVID-19 tests and, given that the process of procuring reagents for ELISA analysis had stopped, the ELISA analysis of currently back-logged samples could not be performed in FY20 and has been postponed to FY21.

Rapid Coverage Evaluation

The rapid coverage evaluation took place from September 28–October 2, providing the coordination team an opportunity to go back to the field and conduct a quick evaluation on the recent MDA. During this evaluation, the coordination team ensured that all targeted districts were treated, and if any sites were left out, they proceeded to treat them. For this evaluation, a randomized clustered strategy was adopted, in which 108 clusters were randomly selected to be surveyed. In each cluster, 10 households were studied, for a total of 1080 households throughout MDA-treated areas.

Through the rapid evaluation, data on key aspects of implementation are collected to provide a snapshot of the distribution process and allow immediate intervention if problems are identified. The rapid evaluation questionnaire is used to i) assess whether end users have received the drugs (confirms that distribution is occurring door-to-door), ii) find reasons for not receiving drugs (allows identification of unreported stock-outs), iii) appraise potential adverse effects (allows identification of mild adverse effects), and iv) determine where end users heard about the MDA (provides information on the effectiveness of the various methods of social mobilization that can be used to amend messages or change social mobilization approaches as needed in the future). Urgent issues identified through this process can be immediately rectified, and on a broader scale, the information from this assessment allows for modification of future training, field activities, and social mobilization to improve the overall MDA implementation process.

Supervision for monitoring and evaluation and DSAs

Supervision for the OV impact assessments was conducted in the field by a team composed of the national coordinator and HDI representative assistant. For the OV impact assessments, the PNMTN team was included as part of the survey teams. Supervision for the rapid coverage evaluation survey was carried out in the field by the national coordinator and the PNMTN team.

Dossier Development

During the second semester of FY20, under the guidance and collaboration of a WHO team, the PNMTN completed the review and resubmission of Togo's trachoma dossier, and MOH is currently waiting for WHO's response. As with most other activities, the process of dossier review at WHO has been delayed due to the pandemic, but the team hopes to get feedback about the trachoma dossier during early FY21.

Short-term technical assistance (STTA)

No activities under STTA for the reporting period.

IR/S. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE NTDS ELIMINATION AND CONTROL

Data security and management

Some challenges in Togo's information system have been identified, such as the inconsistent use of the WHO's Integrated NTD management tool, the fact that not all targeted participants were able to attend the data management training in 2019, and the storage of data in PNMTN members' hard drives. While these issues could not be addressed during the current fiscal year, the PNMTN's plan is to start using a central repository where everyone can access documents easily. Another wish is for data entry into DHIS-2 to be done at community health worker level. These are objectives that Togo's program will pursue in FY21. There are plans for the training of focal points and statisticians on how to enter data in DHIS-2, and a request for assistance with setting up an internal knowledge management system, which should achieve these objectives.

Drug Management

In regard to supply chain, some issues still need to be addressed concerning drug management and storage, like the late arrival of drugs, tablets from multiple lots being combined into a single bottle, occasionally expiration of PZQ tablets before they are used, and the insufficiency of warehouse space for drug storage, which prompts the PNMTN to store drugs in multiple locations. Efforts will continue in FY21 to improve the PNMTN's drug management process including transport, storage, reverse logistics and drug quantification and integrate the PNMTN's supply chain into the national health supply chain system.

MAINSTREAMING AND HSS ACTIVITIES

Develop NTD sustainability plan

The MOH requested technical assistance from Deloitte to help develop sustainability and advocacy plans that will help Togo continue NTD programs beyond the end of external funding. The objective of the second workshop, initially scheduled for March 2020 but cancelled due to COVID-19, was to develop a sustainability plan for Togo. Due to the pandemic, this activity could not take place in FY20 and was postponed to January FY21.

SCH, STH, post-validation/verification surveillance

In the first semester of FY20, Togo had planned to conduct SCH/STH surveys and provide programmatic guidance concerning both NTDs after years of MDA. The last surveys conducted for these NTDs took place in 2015, and after 5 years of high coverage MDA, Togo needs to know what the impact of MDA on infection indicators has been. However, on a February 4 call, USAID advised to postpone these surveys and wait for a WHO SCH/STH protocol currently being developed. These surveys were therefore postponed and budgeted to FY21, with the hope that WHO protocol will be available then.

In the second semester of FY20, several meetings took place between HDI, FHI 360, USAID, and the TFGH to discuss collaborating on proposal development on LF post-validation surveillance in Togo. On July 14, a first call took place between HDI and FHI 360; on July 28, a second call involving HDI, FHI 360, and USAID took place to share discussed ideas about an operational research (OR) on LF surveillance in Togo. On July 30, HDI, FHI 360, USAID, and TFGH had a call to discuss some specifics about an OR on LF post-validation surveillance that could be carried out in collaboration with TFGH. In the absence of clear guidance from WHO about strategies and tools that should be used to do post-validation LF surveillance, a researcher from Togo will develop a proposal with the support of HDI, FHI 360, and the TFGH for OR that will test different strategies in Togo. The proposal is currently being developed. This OR will help Togo detect any

new hot spots of LF infection, determine whether some population groups represent a risk of infection recrudescence, and hopefully provide some guidance to other countries of the region that will need to conduct post-validation LF surveillance, and to the broader international community.

Cross-sector coordination and integration with existing platforms

During this period, Togo had interactions with TFGH, FHI 360, and USAID about ideas for OR strategies for post-validation surveillance of LF in Togo. Efforts are ongoing to develop a full proposal to be submitted to TFGH that we hope will lead to implementation of an OR on LF post-validation surveillance in Togo.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES IN ERA OF COVID-19

(Actions taken to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on program implementation)

After FHI 360 and HDI in Togo were approved to restart program activities that had been postponed due to the pandemic, some adjustments were made to prevent or mitigate infection spread including the purchase of hand sanitizer for HDI staff to use in the field and for office visitors, and the purchase of masks for HDI staff, surveyed children, and office visitors.

In previous years, meetings have taken place regularly before MDA to sensitize highly OV endemic populations (18 villages) on the need to participate in the upcoming MDA and increase MDA coverage. These pre-meetings were conducted in targeted villages with OV prevalence above 5% despite over a decade of treatment with reported good coverage. A preliminary meeting with the village chief was followed by a community meeting with the chief to highlight the importance of community participation in MDA and its impact for both the immediate community and communities across Togo. For FY20, these activities were cancelled and did not take place before the first round integrated MDA, to prevent large group gatherings and prevent spread of the COVID-19 infection.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS PROVIDED/ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

The second semester of FY20 was challenging due to COVID-19 and the subsequent delay and cancellation of program activities. While Togo managed to conduct some activities after USAID gave approval to restart, others had to be rolled over and rescheduled for FY21:

- OV elimination committee meeting (local experts)
- 2021-2026 Strategic Plan development meetings
- STH + SCH Steering Committee meetings
- Cross-border meeting with Benin
- Celebration LF and Trachoma elimination
- ELISA testing of DBS samples from Savanes, Kara, Centrale and Plateaux
- Sustainability plan workshop with Deloitte's technical assistance

Other activities planned for implementation prior to September 30 were delayed and re-scheduled to take place before December of 2020:

- Rapid coverage evaluation, post-MDA
- Drug and data collection, post-MDA

For activities that were delayed and rescheduled to take place after the end of FY20, a no-cost extension was granted for funding of these activities, to be completed before December 31. The rapid evaluation surveys, post-MDA drug and data collection, and FAAs related to these activities are included in this category, planned for completion by October 31.

A more modest challenge was the additional expense associated with the purchase of masks for HDI staff and surveyed children, and for internet connectivity for NTDP and HDI staff working from home during confinement due to the pandemic. Procuring a wireless “USB key” for each person became the solution. While funds were available due to the suspension, cancellation, or postponement of activities, non-budgeted expenses required an approval process before funds could be used. In addition, a few additional days were added to the total days scheduled for the interrupted oncho survey, so the survey teams could go back to where they were when work was suspended, and complete those surveys before moving on to other villages.

The absence of WHO guidance on strategies and tools and on agreed-upon thresholds in regard to LF post-validation surveillance is a significant challenge that makes it difficult for Togo to develop a proposal. This has prompted Togo to develop a study that will test different strategies for LF post validation surveillance in FY21.

Another challenge in Togo’s SCH/STH program is the delay in development of WHO protocols for STH/SCH surveys. The last surveys conducted in Togo for these infections took place in 2015. After five consecutive years of MDAs with high population coverage, it is necessary for Togo to do an evaluation of MDA impact over the previous five years to help decision-making. These surveys were planned in both FY19 and FY20 but not approved by USAID, which recommended waiting for WHO’s protocol. SCH/STH surveys were canceled in FY20 and rescheduled for FY21.

The report by regional health authorities of hematuria cases in some districts is also a source of concern in Togo. Hematuria in NTD-endemic places is usually associated with Schistosomiasis. Given that during previous years, there was not always enough PZQ to cover all districts targeted by Praziquantel MDA, the concern is that there might be some foci of recrudescence SCH transmission. Togo wants to take a closer look at the situation in affected districts. Some funds have been budgeted to conduct such surveys in districts reporting hematuria cases.

TABLE 2: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

Challenge encountered	Solutions	Status (resolved, pending)
COVID-19 related FY20 activities cancellations	Re-scheduling in FY21	Resolved
COVID-19 related FY20 activities postponement	Re-scheduling and submitting a no-cost extension memorandum to FHI 360	Resolved
COVID-19 related non budgeted expenses	Budget developed, submitted, and approved by FHI 360 and HDI	Resolved
Absence of guidance from WHO about LF PVS Surveillance	Hold meetings with different partners to support proposal development	Pending
Delay in development of WHO protocol for STH/SCH surveys	Surveys cancelled in previous two fiscal years have been re-scheduled in FY21	Pending

TABLE 2: CHALLENGES/RESOLUTIONS

Report of hematuria cases in some districts	Budget funds to conduct surveys in the specific settings where hematuria cases were found	Resolved
DBS backlog	Procure reagents to perform ELISAs	Pending

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

TABLE 3: FY20 ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED FY21	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Strategic Planning						
SCH/STH meeting				X		
Strategic Planning meeting						X
MDA Coverage						
Rapid coverage evaluation	X					
Tablets and data collection		X				
Sustainability Plan Meeting				X		

TABLE 5: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
IR1: LF, TRACHOMA, OV (PLUS, SCH, STH IF INTEGRATED)						
Strategic Planning						
Domestic Experts Oncho Follow-up Elimination Committee Meeting (HDI)			X			
Program review and microplanning planning meeting (HDI)					X	
Work planning meeting for FY22 (HDI)				X		
Togo-Benin Oncho cross-border meeting in Benin (HDI)			X			
Togo-Ghana Oncho cross border meeting in Togo (HDI)						X
NTD Secretariat						
Internet subscription (HDI)				X		
Purchase of camera (HDI)		X				
Social Mobilization						
MDA Launch CY21 first round MDA only (HDI)						X
MDA Press conference at central level for CY21 first round MDA only (HDI)						X
Community sensitization in 17 high-prevalence onchocerciasis villages				X		
Training						
Update of training materials/tools for districts medical officers (HDI)						X
Preparing districts medical officers and regional focal point for annual MDA (HDI) (FAA 2)						X
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement						
Drug transportation to regions and districts CY21 first round MDA (HDI)						X
Drug transportation to regions and districts CY20 second round MDA (HDI)			X			

TABLE 5: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
Reverse logistics and data collection for CY21 first round (HDI)					X	
Mapping						
N/A						
MDA Coverage						
Printing of forms, and replacement of some registers for CY21 first round MDA (HDI)			X			
CY20 second round of integrated MDA for OV (17 districts), SCH (32 districts), and STH (7 districts) (FAA 1)				X		
Supervision for MDA						
Supervision of CY20 2nd round MDA (HDI)				X		
SAE investigation (assuming 5 days each for 2 investigation trips (HDI)				X		
Monitoring and Evaluation						
Analysis of backlog of DBS from OV impact assessments				X	X	
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs						
Dossier Development						
Short-Term Technical Assistance						
IR2: SUSTAINABILITY AND HSS STRATEGY ACTIVITIES						
IMPROVING CORE NTD PROGRAM FUNCTIONS						
Data Security and Management (IR2 only)						
Targeted data security TA (Deloitte)				X		
Drug Management (IR2 only)						
NTDP working sessions to revise and update the NTDP logistic management manual / SOP (HDI)					X	
SUSTAINABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND HSS						
Governance Activities						
TIPAC data analysis workshop to identify the NTDP's financial gaps with the MOH (Deloitte)			X			X
Sustainability plan political validation and dissemination (HDI)					X	
Revise and validate the terms of reference for the National Organization Committee for MDA (HDI)						X
Support the NTDP to identify and select the most relevant sustainability interventions from the Sustainability Plan, to include in the Master Plan (HDI)						X
Advocacy targeted meetings (DSME & Nutrition Division) for integrating NTD interventions with other platforms (HDI)			X			
Advocacy sessions with the Ministry of Education to institutionalize the deworming using a school based or "chief-based" platform (HDI)		X				X
Prioritized Functions						
Training of focal points / statisticians for entering PC NTD data into DHIS2 (HDI)						X
DHIS 2 data entry workshop to enter previous years PC NTD data in DHIS 2 (HDI)						X
Resource mobilization advocacy work session to support the NTDP in prioritizing advocacy objectives for domestic					X	

TABLE 5: PLANNED FY21 ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS	Q1			Q2		
	O	N	D	J	F	M
resource mobilization and budget advocacy activities listed in the NTD sustainability plan (Deloitte)						
Advocacy						
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion activities (if applicable)						
IR3: SCH, STH, SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES						
Establish a STH + SCH Steering Committee Meetings (HDI)				X		
Advocacy (IR3 only)						
Social Mobilization (IR3 only)						
Training (IR3 only)						
Drug Supply and Commodity Management and Procurement (IR3 only)						
MDA Coverage (IR3 only)						
Supervision for MDA (IR3 only)						
Monitoring and Evaluation (IR3 only)						
Impact survey for STH/SCH in approximately 90 villages (HDI)			X			
Supervision for Monitoring and Evaluation and DSAs (IR3 only)						
Supervision for impact survey for STH/SCH in approximately 90 villages (HDI)			X			
Short Term Technical Assistance (IR3 only)						